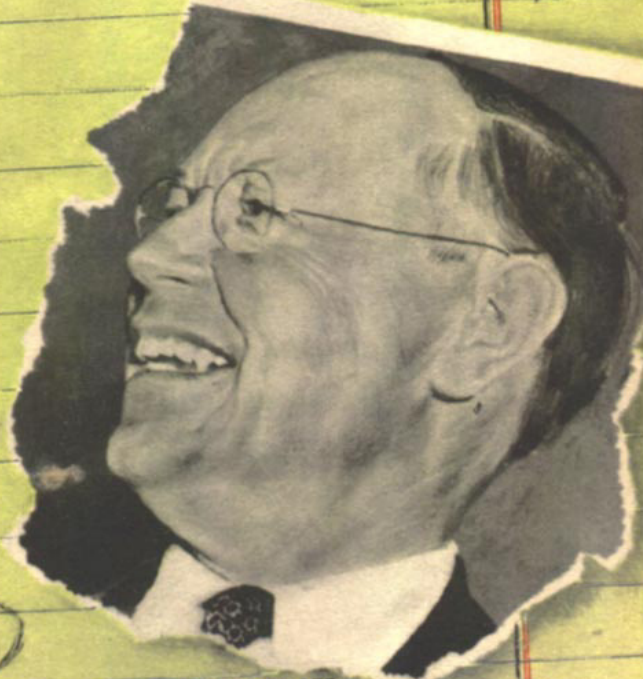


JUNE 1948

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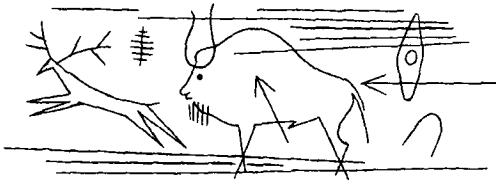
TAFT THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

by Kenneth Crawford Page 647

SENATOR TAFT REPLIES Page 654

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VOLUME LXVI

JUNE 1948

NUMBER 294

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# The American Mercury

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## TAFT THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

BY

KENNETH CRAWFORD

*In the following article Mr. Crawford gives Mr. Taft credit for many of his domestic policies, for his intelligence, integrity and courage, but he has many sharp things to say about Mr. Taft in the realm of foreign affairs. Since the Senator's friends claim, and Mr. Crawford agrees, that he has been one of the most grossly libeled men in contemporary American public life, we thought it fair to depart from our rule regarding profiles of political personalities and to ask Mr. Taft to reply in the same issue. The paragraphs in Mr. Crawford's article are numbered to permit easy reference to them in Mr. Taft's answer, which begins on page 654. Mr. Crawford is a columnist for Newsweek and the author of The Pressure Boys and Report on North Africa. — THE EDITORS*

ROBERT ALPHONSO TAFT, for all his virtues, which are many, is not the people's choice for President in the crisis year 1948; every poll of national sentiment so far taken shows it. Neither is he the choice of the big Republican bosses; they entertain doubts about his ability to win and this time they will probably insist on a winner whatever else he may be.

(2) Yet Taft can't be finally counted out until the delegations are polled at Philadelphia in June. For, in spite of his apparent political weakness, Taft will probably go into the convention with more firmly pledged votes than any other contender, including Thomas E. Dewey. Moreover, he is Taft's candidate and Taft is the most determined man in the Republican

party. He may prove to be a match both for the people and the bosses who don't want him.

(3) If Taft is upset this time, as he was in 1940, when the late Wendell Willkie pulled the rug from under him, he will have a legitimate complaint against the perversity of the times in which he lives. When the Second World War ended in a triumph for American arms early in Harry Truman's administration, Taft had every reason to believe that 1948 would be his kind of year. Several million returning soldiers were fed up with war and eager to settle down to peacetime living. More millions of stay-at-homes were brownd off with wartime restraints and anxious to put a full picnic basket in a new automobile and roam the countryside burning unrationed gasoline. Nobody used the word "normalcy" but that was what people wanted and that was what Taft, more than any other prominent candidate, stood for. The Congressional elections of 1946 were a back-to-normalcy sweep, a complete vindication of Taft's political orientation at that time.

(4) After that two things went wrong — very wrong for Taft. The first was prices, which continued to rise in defiance of Republican predictions that they would submit peaceably to the law of supply and demand once rationing was discontinued and the free enterprise system given a chance to operate. The second was the Russians, who took advantage of premature American disarmament

and America's hangover from the Roosevelt administration's naïveté in matters of international politics to establish hegemony over all of the Balkans and Central Europe and to threaten the independence of Western Europe as well.

(5) By the time 1948 dawned, the glow in the East was not the rosy softness Taft had expected. It was a sinister yellow, the afterglow of a conflict unsettled and perhaps the portent of another. The American mood reacted quickly. The man the people wanted — apparently still want — to lead them through the new day of ordeal was Dwight D. Eisenhower, the same man who had led their boys to death and victory in the last war. The year that should have been Taft's, but for the misbehavior of prices at home and the Russians abroad, turned out to be Eisenhower's. Polls taken early in the year left no doubt of it.

(6) Had Eisenhower permitted his name to be submitted to the voters of New Hampshire in their late winter primary election, Taft might have passed in 1948 as he did in 1944, realizing that he had no chance. But Eisenhower, for his own reasons, which remain somewhat obscure, refused to read the signs of the times. He withdrew unequivocally. Taft and Dewey were put back in the running. Even President Truman, beset by Henry A. Wallace's flamboyant defection and an explosive Southern revolt, was given another chance. More important, perhaps, Eisenhower's withdrawal brought Senator Arthur Van-

denberg of Michigan and former Governor Harold Stassen of Minnesota into the field of possibilities.

## II

(7) There things stand today. Barring the unlikely chance that Truman will withdraw in Eisenhower's favor and that Eisenhower will change his mind in time to accept the Democratic nomination, this is a Republican year if for no other reason than that the country has had an overdose of Democratic rule, which tastes now of mediocrity. The Republican nominee and the next President will be Dewey, Taft, Vandenberg, Stassen, or maybe Speaker Joseph Martin of Massachusetts, whose political coloration is much like Taft's. General Douglas MacArthur is too old, too picturesque, Hearst and the *Chicago Tribune* notwithstanding, to have a chance. Not one of them, with the possible exception of Vandenberg, who has taken on the look of statesmanship in the post-war period, competing in slow company, will inspire spontaneous torchlight parades even among the Republican faithful.

(8) Taft, if he were not so out of joint with the times, would be the pick of this litter. He has intelligence, integrity, courage and a cultivated aptitude for the study of applied political science. He is probably the most vigorous and devoted student of public affairs in Congress, now that Robert M. La Follette is an ex-senator. These are not qualifications to be sniffed at in this day of complex inter-

relationship between government and all the affairs of the governed. He enjoys financial independence, an asset to any statesman, and is bound to a solid family tradition of public service. Moreover, he is a warm human being, subject, like the rest of us, to personal foibles, among them a consuming desire to be President of the United States.

(9) All Taft lacks are the vision and imagination to keep the United States in business as a competitor of Soviet Russia. It is doubtful whether this exemplary American family man, whose pleasant home near Cincinnati, Ohio, looks out over the peaceful sweep of the Little Miami River, can visualize a Siberian slave labor camp or imagine the terror of a Polish Socialist expecting a midnight call from agents of the NKVD. It is more than doubtful whether he could put himself for a moment in the place of tortured Jan Masaryk about to jump out of a window, high up in the Czernin Palace at Prague. Indeed, it is even doubtful whether Taft quite believes that a gang of modern book- and witch-burners out of the Middle Ages has somehow shortcut history to emerge knout in fist and Hitlerian lie in teeth on the unprotected doorstep of Western European civilization.

(10) If Taft is capable of any of these things, his statements on foreign policy have not betrayed it. His voting record has sometimes suggested that his mind is taking in the predicament of the free world in 1948. But he has never allowed that impression to

persist for long. And the American people, who are sometimes as wise collectively as Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln adjudged them, seem to sense Taft's lack of equipment for the next President's principal job — dealing with Soviet Russia.

(11) Taft drives his friends and admirers half crazy by a change of pace that sometimes makes him appear audacious in one area and craven in another almost at the same time. It is important that his moments of audacity are usually displayed in handling domestic problems and his moments of cravenness in his reactions to foreign affairs. He is sure of himself in the America his father served as President and Chief Justice; he finds it difficult to include the outside world in his bold thinking.

(12) Two recent events will illustrate. One has to do with Fair Employment Practices legislation, a proposal to forbid employers anywhere in the United States to discriminate in their hiring against Negroes or members of other racial or religious minorities. This was one of the bills Republican leaders were pushing along in Congress to keep the fires of Southern revolt licking at Truman. Dewey had ingratiated himself with the groups benefited, particularly the Negroes, whose votes in the North are strategically dispersed, by jamming such a law through the New York State Legislature. Taft had a chance, as chairman of the Senate Labor Committee, to grind a party ax and take a profitable issue away from Dewey by

giving the Federal FEP bill a helping hand.

(13) Instead, Taft cast a minority vote against the bill in his committee and attacked it in a gratuitous statement of explanation. He said, in effect: "Race prejudice is a deplorable thing and economic discrimination arising from it is doubly deplorable but I don't believe it is possible to legislate human prejudices out of existence. I favor a law to help educate people against prejudice but I don't favor a futile attempt to coerce them into abandonment of prejudice." Whether right or wrong, this was a brave thing for a Republican Presidential candidate to say. As he anticipated, the Negro press denounced his stand. This was a case where he clearly followed his conscience to the detriment of his Presidential prospects.

(14) It was at about the same time, speaking in the heart of the grain belt, that Taft advocated a reduction in the price the government guarantees farmers they will receive for their crops. Even though he predicated this proposal on a change in the method of calculating so-called parity price — a change which would have benefited farmers — the general effect was to serve notice on American farmers that Taft, if elected President, wouldn't always give them what their Washington lobbies demanded and what they had been accustomed to receiving. Again it was a brave gesture that probably hurt his candidacy, but it enhanced his reputation for forthrightness beyond the call of duty.

## III

(15) However, Taft soon displayed his other, less attractive side, in his statements on the Czechoslovak crisis, which climaxed a long series of Russian aggressions. While this crisis was developing Taft fought stubbornly but unsuccessfully in the Senate to reduce the amount of the European Recovery Plan appropriation from \$5 billion-odd to \$3 billion — in the face of general agreement among the experts that the larger sum was needed to put Europe back on its feet. Then, when the Communists took over Czechoslovakia to forestall an election they were about to lose, Taft said he had “no knowledge of any Russian intention for military aggression” and insisted that “we have to work on the theory that we are going to have peace.” Later he went further, declaring that Truman was using the Czech affair to whip up a war scare and thus distract attention from the Administration’s manifold troubles.

(16) This refusal to face up to the Russian menace was nothing new in Taft but it did suggest a lack of willingness to learn about totalitarian aggression. In August 1941, four months before Pearl Harbor, Taft said: “The [international] situation today looks infinitely safer.” A month later, he proclaimed: “There is much less danger to this country than there was two years ago; certainly much less than there was one year ago.” Defending these statements in 1948, Taft said he still believed that Ger-

many never would have attacked the United States and still doubted that the United States would have joined the war against Germany except for the provocation of Pearl Harbor. In other words, he was still capable of thinking that the United States might have sat smugly at home watching Germany subjugate all Europe. In suggesting this, Taft implied that it might have been a good idea. This kind of thinking raises doubts about his capacity to consider very seriously the need of stopping the new totalitarian aggression, however outrageous this aggressor’s conduct.

(17) Taft opposed selective service in 1940, and he is opposing Universal Military Training now. When war with Germany and Japan came, Taft, of course, supported the Draft Act and other legislation to supply the goods and manpower necessary to win. He has indicated, since Truman asked for Selective Service and UMT, that he would support selective service this time. Even before the Czech crisis, he had advocated an increase in military and naval air power as the best way of preparing the nation to defend itself. But all he wanted to spend was \$1 billion above the regular budget and he wanted to get that sum by taking it away from other branches of the services. What he wanted to do was the easy, popular thing that wouldn’t cost anything, and so wouldn’t embarrass the GOP in pursuing its tax reduction plans.

(18) If Taft were almost anybody else in American politics, he would be

accused of trimming in all this. It would be easy to conclude that he was refusing to see the Russian menace and holding down on defense spending out of deference to the fanatical isolationism of the *Chicago Tribune*, which is supporting him, and to pay the price of its continued support. The fact is that he has gone only about as far as one could go in supporting the Administration's foreign policy without calling down upon himself the wrath of Col. Robert R. McCormick, the *Tribune's* publisher. But in Taft's case this is charitably put down to coincidence. And in view of his often-demonstrated political courage on other fronts this is probably the correct analysis. Taft drags his feet on foreign policy and defense not so much out of considerations of political expediency as out of devotion to a concept of America that rests on a sort of emotional isolationism. Its seat is in the gizzard rather than the head, for Taft is not intellectually isolationist.

(19) To suggest any kinship between Taft's isolationism and Wallace's would be to libel the Senator from Ohio. Wallace's faith in pacifism and the noble aspirations of the Russians is newly acquired and a political convenience. It gives him the support of the Communist Fifth Column and thus a nucleus for the Third Party with which he hopes to beat the Democratic nominee next fall even, as he has said, if this elects Taft. In the process of keeping his Communist disciples happy, he seems to have

embraced their world revolutionary religion. Taft is neither calculating enough to play cheap home politics with U. S. foreign relations nor soft-headed enough to be taken in by the support such a play might bring him. He will never be a disciple of the Guru, of Stalin or even of Robert McCormick. His is a healthy, if sometimes timid, mind.

#### IV

(20) Some of Taft's friends insist that, once burdened with the responsibilities of the Presidency, he would perforce follow the path of Russian-resisting U. S. foreign policy marked out by Secretaries James F. Byrnes and George Marshall. His opposition to this policy, which has never been carried to the point of outright obstruction, they tell you, is only the expression of Taft's sense of duty as leader of the loyal opposition in the Senate and of his faith in the two-party system, which can exist only if one party opposes the other. This argument is not wholly unconvincing. Throughout the current session of Congress Taft has deferred to Vandenberg in matters of foreign policy, confining himself to statements of his own dissenting views, and Vandenberg's leadership has made it possible for the Administration to get ERP in operation. But Americans looking for firm U. S. leadership in world affairs will scarcely be satisfied to accept a man whose only virtue in this field is the half-heartedness and consequent ineffectuality of his opposition.

(21) Taft's position in domestic, as in foreign affairs, has been much misunderstood — deliberately misunderstood in some quarters. During the war his nostalgia for the good old days when America stayed at home and minded its own business was interpreted by the Communists as a lack of anti-fascist zeal, which it was not, and made the basis for the kind of smear campaign which only the Commies have the gall to undertake. At the same time his anti-New Dealism in domestic affairs was called moss-backed reaction, which it was not. Few men in public life have been more grossly libeled.

(22) Taft is, in fact, an American traditionalist. He believes in free enterprise, civil liberties and a maximum of local self-government as opposed to centralized Washington rule. But, like most intelligent men of this familiar school, he has bent his basic philosophy of government to the requirements of a complex industrial society. He was against price controls and led the fight to repeal them, but he has defended continued rent control.

(23) His Taft-Hartley Law, which has been called a slave labor act, is nothing of the kind and even organized labor doesn't believe it is. It is an elaboration of the Wagner Act to extend to labor leaders some of the re-

straints the original law placed upon employers only. It has turned out to be popular in spite of the efforts of the unions to make it appear the ultimate in reaction and in spite of some bad flaws. It was infinitely better, from labor's standpoint, than the really reactionary postwar proposal to repeal the Wagner Act and turn industrial relations back to the jungle. Taft is the author of a series of housing, health and education measures which would look New Dealish except that all of them would place initiative and responsibility in local rather than Federal government, and that none of them goes far enough to be very expensive or, in all probability, very effective.

(24) From his baggy suits, which look as though they have come off the \$50-ready-to-wear rack, to his wide-mouthed smile, Taft is what the Hollywood type-caster would choose to portray an honest small town lawyer, doctor or merchant. Even so, he is not the extrovert his appearance suggests. He finds it hard to be hearty and his efforts at it don't quite come off. The boy who was first in his class in Taft School, Yale and Harvard Law still works better with his head than with his handshaking right. In normal times Taft would probably make an excellent President. But these are not normal times.





## REPLY BY SENATOR TAFT

WHEN the editor of THE AMERICAN MERCURY showed me Mr. Crawford's article, my inclination was to return it without comment, as just another product of the New Deal writers who have attacked me for years for the simple reason that I have been one of the most outspoken opponents in public life of New Deal principles and measures. Their theory has been that if they could knock down anyone who dared to oppose them openly, other possible opponents would be discouraged.

However, the editor wanted to know just what was wrong with the article, and offered to print my criticism. So, here goes —

There is hardly a paragraph in Mr. Crawford's article which does not make some incorrect or unfair assumption, or at least assume the sanctity of some principle which is sacred only to New Dealers. From such unfair assumptions it is easy to argue to untrue conclusions.

I shall play the part of an editor going over Mr. Crawford's article paragraph by paragraph. In so doing I shall attempt to point out all of the incorrect and unfair assumptions which sound convincing to the honest reader. The technique is not new; in fact it is the whole basis of left-wing argument the world over.

Let's consider paragraphs one and five together. They assume the sacredness of the so-called public opinion polls. I dispute the value of such Presidential polls, primarily because they are taken among people most of whom have not even considered politics for four years. In other words, they represent a purely superficial opinion and indicate casual preferences instead of the kind of public opinion which would register itself in the election. Look at the result in Wisconsin, contrasted to the conclusions which were drawn by many from the Gallup Polls.

Paragraph one also says that I am not the choice of the "big Republican bosses." I don't know who these bosses are, but if you picked out twenty of the most active political leaders, I would venture to think that there are more of them for me than there are for any other candidate.

Mr. Crawford insults the American people in paragraph three by assuming that the only purpose of "peacetime living" is to drive around in automobiles to picnics, described as "normalcy." He ignores the fact that the whole purpose of the founding of this government was to assure liberty for its people instead of totalitarian regulation.

Now let's look at paragraph four.

This implies that I predicted that if price control and rationing were discontinued prices would come down. I never made any such prediction. Nobody with an ounce of economic knowledge could suggest that prices would fall *before* supply caught up with demand. I was in favor of continued price control until it could be gradually abandoned.

Nothing "went wrong for Taft." I gained only popularity by knocking spots out of the President's attempt to revive regimentation, by showing that controls could further restrict supply, as they have in Great Britain.

There also is the assumption that the Russian threat was in some way the fault of the American people. This reveals the complete New Deal leaning of the article by glossing over the whole series of fatal errors made by Roosevelt as "naïveté."

Paragraph five makes the same false assumption about the polls and says General Eisenhower is "the people's choice." This inside knowledge of what "the people" want is part of the Communist Party line.

As for paragraph six, I had no concern about the "Eisenhower threat," and a possible victory in New Hampshire would not have affected my course in any way. To say that Eisenhower's reasons for not running "remain obscure" is to insult the former Chief of Staff, who stated them so that an honest schoolboy could understand. Mr. Crawford implies that I passed up the nomination in 1944 because I realized that I had no chance.

This is untrue. I felt an obligation to permit John Bricker to run, and did not desire to give up my seat in the Senate. I was up for reelection. This helps to contradict the statement in paragraph eight that I have a consuming desire to be President. Whatever the Republican party does in June is all right with me, but I do want a candidate who will put into effect the governmental principles in which I believe. I am reasonably sure I would be that kind of candidate.

## II

Paragraph seven shows a complete lack of appreciation of the real reason for Republican success, the support of American principles against the New Deal. As for Democratic rule tasting of "mediocrity," it is evident that Mr. Crawford yearns for the glamorous days of Teheran and Yalta.

Paragraph nine is simply nonsense. I have been to Europe six times and am just as able to understand the horrors of a Siberian labor camp as anyone else. But I am always concerned in my thought and speeches with the practical question, What can we do about it? There is little can be done at the moment regarding these horrors in the Russian zone of influence, even if we decide that we ought to go to war. These atrocities were made possible by the tragic pro-Communist mistakes of the Roosevelt administration, long ardently endorsed by Mr. Crawford. In considering whether we should go to war to correct these errors, I may not visual-

ize a Siberian slave labor camp, but I do visualize 300,000 American boys killed in the last war, 300,000 families bereaved, and the ultimate futility of that war. I am looking forward to see whether American policy can successfully avoid a repetition, probably far more tragic for us than the last war.

Paragraph ten ignores the fact that I have supported every practical measure to confine Russia to the huge zone placed behind the Iron Curtain by Roosevelt. I will refrain from steps which would lead to a war with Russia until such a war is proved to be absolutely unavoidable. The writer of the article does not want to understand that my every action is dictated by the principle, first, that this country shall remain free, and second, that it shall remain at peace. Every American principle is weakened by war, and war is only justified if it is essential to maintain the freedom, immediate or ultimate, of the American people. It is because I know the world, the difficulty of improving people by force, the futility of war throughout history, that I am so determined to prevent war if possible.

The use of the word "cravenness" in paragraph eleven, therefore, is just plain smearing.

The sentence in paragraph twelve, "This was one of the bills Republican leaders [pushed] along in Congress to keep the fires of Southern revolt licking at Truman," doesn't make sense and isn't true. If Republican leaders had any political purpose it was to carry out their party platform and to

please the Negroes in the North. However, I don't think the charge of politics against the advocates of the bill is fair, because most of them believe in it sincerely. How can a statement of explanation, by a public man, ever be "gratuitous"? (Paragraph 13.) Incidentally, Mr. Crawford puts into quotation marks something he claims I said "in effect."

I did not figure the political chances on the farm price support question at all (paragraph 14). I was merely stating the consensus of opinion in Congress and among the agricultural organizations themselves, and I got both "criticism and credit" to which I was not entitled.

In paragraph fifteen, the author again makes no attempt to understand my practical approach to every question, nor my belief that principle is important. Obviously, the Russians have not desired to precipitate war up to the present time or they could easily have done so. Instead of that, they have pursued a policy of spreading Communism throughout the world by fomenting disorder and by infiltration into governments. We actually aided them to do this, by a diplomacy which in China and elsewhere favored the inclusion of Communists in the government. What happened in Czechoslovakia was merely the obvious result of the policy we had pursued. It was no evidence whatever of an intention on the Russian part to change their policy and undertake military aggression. The men who seized the government

were Czechs, backed by Russian armament, much as the Greek government is backed by our armament. This development did not indicate any change in the apparent Russian fear of precipitating a military war.

I have been active for every measure to check Communism in this country. I sponsored provisions to get rid of Communists in labor unions and in the government. I supported the Marshall Plan, although unsound economically by the admission of its own advocates, in order to check Communism. I felt that the lavish scale of spending was unnecessary and that it actually injured the plan. My charge that the danger of war is being used to put across certain Administration policies was derived directly from Jimmy Reston's article in the *New York Times*; and he is friendly to the present foreign policy and fully advised on conditions abroad.

### III

In paragraph sixteen, certain words are taken out of their context, from my speeches — an old trick of those who are deliberately unfair. In both cases, I was discussing the possibility of war with Germany. I was pointing out that after Hitler attacked Russia in 1941, there was much less danger to this country than in 1940 when Hitler threatened to overwhelm England. It was the Russian adventure which really wrecked Germany. I don't think anyone can question the soundness of these statements if this situation is understood. Incidentally,

the prejudice of the writer is shown by his omission from the second quotation of the words, "from Hitler today" after the word "country." The sentence should read, "There is much less danger in this country from Hitler today than there was two years ago; certainly much less than there was one year ago." Thus he tries to make it appear that I said there was less danger from Japan. Various New Deal writers have picked up a false charge made by a CIO-PAC writer in 1944 that I said in 1941: "It is simply fantastic to suppose there is any danger of an attack on the United States by Japan." I never made any such statement. I never predicted anything about Japan because the Administration was keeping us in complete ignorance; and I never had means of knowing whether our game of bluff in the Far East was likely to prevent or provoke war.

It might also be pointed out that both Willkie and Roosevelt in the Fall of 1940 *after* the German blitz and *before* Russia was in the war, swore that they would keep this country at peace. Roosevelt obviously did not see how he could start a war with Germany, and the Germans did not want us in the war. The Pearl Harbor investigation showed that Roosevelt welcomed a Japanese attack, because it provided a means of getting into the German war. The basic question about totalitarian aggression is not whether the aggressor's conduct is outrageous, but whether the aggression is likely to threaten the

freedom of the United States. Otherwise, we should have gone to war with Russia two years ago.

Paragraph seventeen is entirely unfair. I advocated a completely adequate national defense, both before the second world war and at the present time. I voted for all appropriations for the Army submitted by President Roosevelt. I advocated recently the plan of the Finletter Committee, the cost of which the first year is only about a billion dollars because planes could not be delivered in any quantity before July 1949. I believe that the need for Navy and ground forces is likely to be exaggerated in the kind of war we might have to fight. I am opposed to compulsory universal military training in peacetime, not because it is unpopular (polls show that it is very popular if one believes in polls), but because it is regimentation of the worst type, and contrary to all American political philosophy, besides being expensive and, in my opinion, and the opinions of many high ranking military men, a very poor method of providing reserves. Why my course on this should be called "trimming," I don't understand. Again, my whole attitude is a strictly practical attitude combined with the belief that the New Dealers and the Army are more than willing to use this whole war crisis to restore a New Deal regimentation in the United States. The author of the article sympathizes with this desire and, therefore, doesn't understand what my reasons are. My policy is to provide

quietly and effectively the most efficient defense. I feel that Congress would provide this if the facts were clearly explained without the necessity of arousing the people to an emotional state to prepare them for war.

Paragraph eighteen also, of course, completely misrepresents my position, both in the credit and blame which it gives me. It refers to "emotional isolationism." This doesn't mean anything. My view is clear. I want to keep out of war unless American freedom is threatened.

The reference in paragraph nineteen to a timid mind is the same sort of smearing which talks about cravenness. I have never opposed the U. S. foreign policy marked out by Secretaries Byrnes and Marshall. In fact, I have never felt that they went far enough. Byrnes only came over to this policy under Republican urgings. Secretary of State Marshall is still soft towards Communism in China. The failure to take the ERP global world plan in detail as outlined by State Department New Deal planners is certainly no evidence of lack of interest in opposing Communism.

This article shows in paragraph twenty-one that it isn't "only the Commies" who indulge in smearing.

Paragraph twenty-four recurs to the general unfriendly thesis that I can't be nominated, which has no basis of fact.

The article is obviously designed to harm my candidacy, and is the more fundamentally unfair because in a few places it attempts to be patronizing.

# HOW TO LIBERATE THE COLLEGES

BY BERGEN EVANS

**S**TUDENTS — not faculties or deans or boards of regents — started universities and as long as they were in control the universities were vital and valuable to society. When the professors took over they began to decline and after half a dozen centuries of somnolence had reached such a state of torpor that there was hardly a shudder when the administrators muscled in. It didn't matter much. By that time no one took colleges seriously anyway.

But in the past thirty years there has been a tremendous change: the colleges and universities have bestridden every avenue of advancement. No young man can get anywhere in the professions, business or the arts without paying them high tribute in time and money. In 1918 it was an advantage to go to college; in 1948 it is a disadvantage not to. There's a world of difference and it now matters very much who controls these institutions.

The history of the universities is interesting and not without bearing on their present crisis.

They were started, as had been

said, by students. They were unions (workers' combines in French Canada are still called universities) formed to protect the young men who came from all over Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries to listen to the lectures of certain famous men at Bologna, Padua, Paris and Salerno. As non-citizens of these city-states the young men were not protected by the laws; they were gouged for rent, cheated of their tuition and robbed and even murdered with impunity. To protect themselves they banded together and threatened — the only thing they could threaten — to take themselves, and their rent and tuition, elsewhere in search of better treatment.

The full force of this threat can be appreciated only when we realize that the students often outnumbered the townsmen and that the teachers were usually townsmen. So that a mass migration, or *cessatio*, would mean utter ruin for the merchants and an end of the teachers' careers. It was not an idle threat, either. Again and again the universities *did* migrate and while they were sometimes wheedled

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back they didn't always come, and several once-flourishing towns were left in a desolation from which they never recovered.

Of course the threat was valid only so long as the students, in their corporate character, had no assets. The *strength* of the early universities lay in the fact that they did *not* have buildings, libraries, endowments, museums, stadiums or laboratories. Their *lack* of all that is now regarded as indispensable enabled them to be independent. They could clear out at the drop of a mortarboard.

Considering the power this gave them, they behaved with commendable moderation. From the townspeople they demanded rent controls and fair treatment under the law. From their teachers they were a little more exacting: the professor had to be punctual; he had to stop within a minute of the bell; he had to say something worth listening to; he was not allowed to spend too much time on bibliography; he could not evade questions by saying "Look that up" or "We'll discuss that later"; if he drew less than five auditors he was fined (some wretched dullards used to hire stooges to meet the minimum!); and students were not required to pay for a course until they had attended at least three lectures to see if they were likely to get their money's worth.

It is plain from such regulations that the students themselves fostered a somewhat more mature attitude than most college administrations

now foster for them. They were clearly excited by knowledge and hungry for it and were not to be fobbed off with extra-curricular activities. Not that there were not plenty of such activities, if we may judge from Chaucer's glimpses of student life; but the students then preferred to manage these matters for themselves on the outside and to keep their college work clean. Classes were combative. There was a brisk give and take between the instructor and his audience. The disputations, in particular, were highly exciting, with much egging on of the contestants and shouting and stamping of feet. They were passionately partisan affairs. Cheerleaders were not needed, though seconds, surgeons and coroners were often called in.

## II

Such were the universities in their days of greatness. Mayors and other worshipful persons stood humbly before them. Kings and Popes contended for their support, each outbidding the other with privileges and immunities until they became states within the state. Oxford, though but a shadow of her medieval self, still has her own courts and sends her own representative to parliament. It is "right pleasing and acceptable to Us," Henry III wrote to the citizens of Cambridge, and "no small profit to our kingdom and honor to Ourself" that "a multitude of scholars flow together to our city of Cambridge." The citizens, he felt, "should rejoice



and be glad" in such a jocund company but instead, he had heard, they were "so heavy and burdensome in letting of lodgings" that the students might be forced to leave the city "and having abandoned the university, depart from our land." This "We in no respect desire . . . therefore bear yourselves more measurably . . . so that ye may be held safe, for if any complaint should arrive to Us, We might put our hand to the matter."

The Church was no less solicitous. It was largely to the influence of the University of Paris that France owed her comparative immunity from the ravages of the Holy Inquisition. And it was the universities, when the Great Schism was fast demoralizing all Europe, that, preceding the Council of Constance, practically took the helm and prepared the public mind for the deposition of a Pope by the College of Cardinals. It was the doctors of the Sorbonne who burned Joan of Arc. They were more powerful and autocratic than any modern board of trustees could dream of being. By the end of the fifteenth century no political party could hope to remain in power in France without their approbation. And when they corrected Pope John XXII on a point of faith and morals his Holiness humbly apologized "for venturing to express an opinion upon a theological question" when he was not a doctor. He wasn't being sarcastic either.

Many things contributed to their decline from this high pinnacle.

For one thing their intellectual life was overwhelmed by disputatiousness. Logic, like football, which in many ways it resembles, came to be more of a spectacle than a wholesome exercise. In time the students disputed for the sheer love of contention and the subjects examined approached the supernatural fatuity of many Ph.D. theses. In common lore this is illustrated by the allegation that they discussed "How Many Angels can dance on the Point of a Pin?" but scholars doubt the authenticity of this particular subject; it sounds suspiciously like the invention of some nineteenth-century skeptic. It's near enough to the truth, however, to be a good joke. They actually did discuss what angels do with a body which they have employed on an earthly mission and no longer need and the nature of the physical sensations which the Virgin Mary may have experienced at the Annunciation.

Then, as their arteries hardened, they grew authoritarian. Men were no longer allowed to talk back to the mighty dead. A Doctor of Medicine at Paris was compelled, under threat of imprisonment, to retract a proposition which he had advanced in opposition to Aristotle. And when you've reached that state—whether the authority be Aristotle, Mrs. Grundy, the Church, the Legion or students' parents—you have ceased to exist as an intellectual force.

But worst of all they grew rich. When they acquired buildings and endowments the old threat of getting

the hell out became a hollow bluff. They sold their birthright for a mess of gothic pottage. The buildings before which the tourist stands in prescribed awe do not mark the rise but the decline of learning.

Furthermore, as the universities became wealthy and privileged they became conservative. The status quo was too favorable to be disturbed. The professors, having created a teaching monopoly, grew lazy and let assistants do the lecturing while they devoted themselves to college politics and administration. In America they were to go one step further and sell themselves into bondage by letting administration become a wholly separate business, often placing it in the hands of men who had no interest in knowledge whatever.

### III

The students had been subjugated by being persuaded that they should be candidates for degrees. Originally they simply came and got what they wanted or what they could. But when they came to want degrees and labels which only the teachers could confer they had to please the teachers; whereas formerly the teachers were forced to please them. And with the growth of the college system, as at Oxford, they were reduced to mere schoolboys with prescribed hours and rules of conduct.

(This degeneration, by the way, which all our eastern universities seem so eager to emulate, must have reached its nadir in a suggestion a

mid-western college addressed to parents in its catalog for 1860. "The strongest temptations of the young to vice," it solemnly warned, are furnished by entrusting them with pocket money. To avoid this danger, parents were urged to send such money "to some member of the Faculty" who would see that it was spent in a virtuous way, "charging for the service a commission of 3 per cent.")

The intellectual independence, of course, was as sternly suppressed as the physical. In 1542 Heidelberg passed a ruling which forbade students to criticize their professors — a sad decline from the old Leipzig statute which fined anyone who threw rocks at the lecturer or the quaint custom at Caen of requiring an oath from all who came up for their finals that they would not attempt to kill the examiners if they failed!

In the fourteenth century Oxford, to name a striking example, had been a fountain of creative social impulses that shook the world as it was not shaken again until the French Revolution. Wycliffe's priests had gone out to preach the dangerous doctrine of applied Christianity and the peasants had risen against their oppressors in mute anguish. But after the Peasants' Rebellion had been crushed, "safe" men were put in charge and the university dwindled and slept. Between the fifteenth and the twentieth centuries no really significant idea had its inception within the colleges. Instead of being the cradle of living issues, Oxford became the home of

lost causes. She who had once trained agitators for Wat Tyler and Jack Straw became feeble, even as a reactionary force, and produced such anemic absurdities as the Oxford Movement and the Oxford Groups.

A new social group injected a new element of weakness. The feudal nobles had despised learning as fit only for clerks and lawyers, but with the rise of the merchants education became fashionable with the upper classes. The colleges were flattered when the sons of the rich started coming and fawned upon them. Noblemen were given degrees the very day they arrived — or the next day if, like my Lord Rochester, they were too tired from travel to be bothered the first day. In 1549 Latimer complained that “there be now none but great men’s sons in colleges” and his complaint remained valid for almost four hundred years. The universities at their inception had been democratic; they came to be a hallmark of snobbery. Scholarships were provided for a few poor students but the miserable creatures that held them were required, in exchange, to perform menial services for the professors and their more fortunate fellow students and were regarded with contempt.

In America, where there were no nobles and, until recently, no large group of exceptionally rich families, the social function of the colleges has been to insure the dominance of the bourgeoisie by ensuring their control of the professions and, recently, of business and the armed forces.

## IV

But after centuries of lethargy the universities are showing signs of renewed life. It is happening largely by accident, but it’s happening. The falling interest rate is nullifying endowments and the income tax is rendering gifts unlikely, so that higher education is once again chiefly dependent upon student fees. That puts the students in a strong bargaining position and once they realize that fact they may start laying down the law again. They will never have the full strength they once had because the immensity and complexity of our industrial civilization compels the certification and labeling of degrees and hence, to some extent, makes students dependent upon professors. And the sciences, in particular, require expensive apparatus for their demonstration, apparatus that it would be idle to threaten to walk away and leave. But they will surely find new ways of expressing their grievances. There are many ways of making their opinions felt within their own university or among competing institutions. They will wake up suddenly and realize that it is within their power to put an end to irrelevance and pedantry and academic bullying. Overnight the whole pompous incubus of “scholarship” and sterile monographs and credits and grades and academic rank may be jettisoned in favor of informed and provocative discussion of the vital issues.

The crucial battle, so far as the

future of education in America is concerned, is going to be fought over the manner of distribution of government funds. All higher education in America today is to some extent supported by the state and has been, what with WPA and other assistance during the depression and immense wartime contracts and subsidies, for fifteen years. The real question is not whether some colleges shall remain "independent." No important college is completely independent of government aid at the moment nor can any hope to be. The question is whether public money shall (1) go directly to the colleges, to be spent by them for the students' good as they see it, or (2) whether, as in the GI Bill of Rights, a significant portion of it shall go to the students to be spent by them at whatever college they choose.

It is not merely a matter of book-keeping. The first alternative permits faculties and administrations to con-

tinue in autocratic self-indulgence. The second gives the students a control over their own education that is bound to have far-reaching consequences. Some of these consequences are dangerous, it is true. The young are easily deceived by false prophets. The sense, so strong among the veterans, of a need to make up the lost years quickly will tend to exalt the utilitarian at the expense of the cultural and to reduce the universities to trade or technical schools. But there will be compensations: the universities will have to come to life, to view the world with more courage, to see their function as something more than fighting a rear-guard action in defense of a retreating endowment.

There is a blast of fresh air blowing through the musty linoleumed halls. Some find it chilling and cast furious looks at the open door. Some find it invigorating. What to some seems an augury of destruction to others seems a portent of rebirth.

### PHRASE ORIGINS—30

**IN CAHOOTS WITH:** *The word "cahoot" is undoubtedly related to the German Kajüte (cabin), of which it was once an exact translation. In the old South and West, to be "in cahoot" with another (the modern plural form is a later innovation) meant to share one's hut or cabin with him. From this, the transition to "partnership" or "collaboration" was an easy one. Somewhere in transit, the word acquired popularity in the combination "in cahoots with the Devil." As a result the expression has become somewhat déclassé and, today, has more than a little of the aroma of collusion and shady dealing about it.*

LOUIS JAY HERMAN

# CANADIAN IDEALS AND U. S. DOLLARS

BY BRUCE HUTCHISON

OF ALL civilized peoples we Canadians are the dumbest. I use that word in its original sense — our tongues are tied. In the daily business of national life we seem competent enough. By the accepted and barbarous test of the times we have been successful. Our living standard is second only to that of our American neighbors. In many matters of real importance, also, our achievements are respectable. But how we built this curious, contradictory nation, what we are trying to do with it or where it is going we refuse to reveal. We cannot articulate the content of Canadian civilization or even prove to foreigners that it has a content peculiar to itself because we are a society of mutes, deep in a smothering Arctic silence.

This is not immediately apparent to the American. He finds the Canadian capable of speech, and in an understandable dialect, derived from English. But after he has been here for a while the American begins to realize that this speech hardly goes an inch below the surface of Canadian life, that in Canada the physical act of

uttering sounds is never the expression of national ideas. Small wonder, then, that the American returns home suspecting that no such ideas exist. Less wonder that the great mass of Americans, who never see Canada, think of it only as a tourist poster.

In happier times this mattered little. Today it is highly dangerous to both Canadians and Americans. For Canadians have quietly entered the greatest crisis of their history and are unable to explain its meaning to their closest friends; and Americans do not suspect what is happening in a nation more directly important to them than any other in the world, the strategic land mass lying directly between them and the Soviet Union.

On November 17 last the Canadian government admitted the economic crisis — but not the larger crisis behind it — by clamping down embargoes on American imports. A few days later this writer called on two of the most powerful members of the United States Senate. Neither had heard that Canada was in trouble; they had seen only a tiny paragraph in a Washington paper. (If Panama or

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Cuba had embargoed American goods the news would have been spread on every front page.) Neither understood the place of Canada in the economic, political and military framework of the United States. Neither realized, it seemed to me, that Canada is the United States' best customer, its greatest outside supplier, and the area of its largest foreign investment; that the political climate of Canada is vital to the United States since it could not tolerate an alien ideology on its closest flank; that militarily Canada is more vital to the United States than any other area anywhere; and that, in a lonely sort of way, Canada is the United States' single companion in the current siege, the only other real area of free enterprise of importance left in the world.

How, the senators asked me, is it possible for Canada to be in difficulties when it enjoys an unexampled boom, fabulous resources, a stable society, a free, abundant life? I would have liked to answer the senators but there was no time and, being a Canadian, I fell silent in front of foreigners. It occurred to me, however, that if American statesmen do not know the answer ordinary Americans must know much less. At the senators' suggestion I agreed to put the thing down in writing if I could.

## II

The immediate cause of the Canadian crisis is political and economic. Its real cause, as we shall see, is deeper.

Politically, Canada is the product of a world now dead, or in a state of suspended animation. When the control of the world was divided between about half a dozen great nations in rough balance the net of power was loose enough to let small nations grow according to their individual geniuses. In such a world, Canada enjoyed a growth entirely unique and, considering its opportunities, pretty satisfactory. But when the world falls under the control of two hostile giants and the net of power is suddenly drawn tight, little room is left for independent small states. For preservation they must seek shelter behind one giant or the other.

Perhaps in such a world the small state is an anachronism, a minor dinosaur which cannot survive the change of climate while the great dinosaurs are busy preparing an atomic temperature which will make them obsolete also. In any case, when a small state happens to lie directly between giants engaged in a cold war, and when the small state is cheerfully mapped out as the Belgium of the war if it gets hot, then the small state must be made of stern stuff indeed to maintain a real independence.

This is the true position of Canada. It could be disguised so long as the hope of One World endured after the recent war. It penetrated even the hard mental rind of this country when the giants started to slug their quarrel out in public. We see now that if the mills of the twin gods ever grind in earnest, Canada will be one

of the grains between the millstones. Even if it doesn't come to that, the attrition of rival powers will wear down all but the toughest states directly exposed, as Canada is. A good many states are worn pretty smooth already. Thus Canadian nationality, under the best of conditions, must face swingeing and unprecedented pressures.

The economic emergency is more obvious and more immediate. It arises from the same general cause, the collapse of the world community.

Canada has always lived by trading in that community. To use its resources to the best advantage, it developed an economy sprawling from America to Europe. It sold far more than it bought in Europe, thereby accumulating a surplus of money. It bought far more than it sold in the United States (mostly materials for its own industry), accumulating a money deficit.

In a multilateral world it could change its surplus European money into dollars and pay off what it owed to the Americans. The revolving movement of goods between the United States, Europe and Canada, the great triangle of the North Atlantic, carried the largest part of the world's commerce and it made Canada richer than any nation of its size in history.

But when Europe no longer could pay for Canadian goods in cash, when Canada had to give them away or sell them on the cuff in a gigantic Marshall Plan of its own, and when, at

the same time, it had to import more than ever from the United States to fuel its expanded industrial machine, then Canada was heading straight for national bankruptcy.

More than half our dollar and gold reserves flowed to the United States in the massive financial hemorrhage of 1947. We would have gone broke within a few months if the government had not restricted American imports, arranged its first American loan and waited for the ERP to provide its European customers with more cash.

This, in the soothing language of politics, is called a temporary embarrassment. Actually it has wrenched Canada's prewar economy out of joint, for in the visible future Europe will not be able to buy here on the old scale. Canada thus is faced with the alternatives of permanently restricting its American imports and hence its living standard (to the great damage of many American industries) or vastly expanding its exports into the United States.

These two superficial facts — sudden exposure to the sharp edge of power politics in a power-ridden world and collapse of economic foundations — were sufficient alone to plunge Canada into a major crisis. Such conditions are so obvious that even a Canadian should be able to articulate them. When it comes to the third and largest fact articulation fails. We are dumb before the thing we know and feel most deeply. Perhaps, in part at least, our history will explain it.



## III

The history of the United States is a triumph of logic written into a constitution. The history of Canada is a victory over logic, by means never legally recorded. From the beginning logic denied the possibility of a Canadian nation.

The lines of North American geography, and hence the natural channels of commerce and nationality, running north and south; the distribution of resources which left Canada short of many essentials plentiful in the United States; the very glaciers which shaved off the top soil of central Canada and deposited it south of the forty-ninth parallel, driving the naked pre-Cambrian Shield like a wedge down the center of the country; the division of the Canadian race between Latin and Anglo-Saxon; and finally the magnetic pull of the larger body upon the smaller all might have proved to any geopolitician that even if Canada were created on paper it must soon break up and fall piecemeal into the American Union.

For a century American policy was based on that expectation. Two American invasions having failed to conquer Canada, American statesmen waited for it to drop from the northern tree like a frozen plum. "I know," cried Seward in 1867, the year of Canada's national birth, "that Nature designs that this whole continent, not merely these 36 states, shall be, sooner or later, within the magic circle of the American Union."

We are still outside that circle and, to tell the truth, it doesn't look very magical to us. How to explain, then, the survival and increasing strength of Canada, an economic monstrosity, a political prodigy and, racially, a two-headed baby?

The negative reasons are clear enough. Canada was the second nation created by the American Revolution. The Americans who were on the losing side fled north to people the wilderness and their loyalty to Britain provided the mystique of a new state. Canada was built originally and long lived on horror at the act of rebellion against the Crown and on hatred of the rebels.

American pressure, otherwise called Manifest Destiny, served to keep these sentiments alive far beyond their time. Half a century ago, when I was a boy, we were still taught to dislike and fear the Americans, to admire the English and to feel inferior to both. We have passed that stage of adolescence. We have forgiven the American Revolution and can hardly understand why our ancestors opposed it. We have imitated our neighbors' gadgets, most of their manners, many of their social habits, all their economic methods, until foreigners imagine there is no real difference between us.

That is where all outsiders go wrong. We are two very different peoples in America. And in Canada we still retain an abiding aversion to what you might call the inner tone of American life (perhaps because we

have never heard it through the outer blare). We like Americans better than we like anyone but we think their life is inferior in happiness, despite its wealth and speed, to ours.

These are the negative forces which stamped down the shape of Canada from the outside. They alone would not have produced a nation for they had no life in them. The positive and living force which created Canada — the thing which, more than politics or economics, is in crisis today — cannot be identified so easily.

In the United States the same intangible is called the American Dream. Such words are too fancy for us. We don't talk about the Canadian Dream, though it is equally strong. We don't talk about this thing at all. We feel embarrassed if anyone mentions it. All our resources of silence, our unequalled mastery of the deadpan, are mobilized to prevent the stranger from seeing into our hearts.

If the stranger suspects that they are empty, if he has never understood the national spirit of Canada, the fault is not his but ours. Can he be expected to guess that the instinct of Canadianism is so real, so tender and so proud that, like the reticence of a young man, it must be hidden under a veneer of stolidity?

But if anyone doubts the vehemence of that secret flame let him look across the empty wastes of Canada, the few centers of habitation strung like garments on a clothes line, the wink of lonely lights on the

cold breast of the prairies, the villages lost in the mountains, the camps forgotten in the tundra, and then let him ask himself why these people have clung together and endured every shock of economics and all the twist and pull of racial division when a rich neighbor was waiting to welcome them in.

Let him explain, if he can, how twelve million people, scattered in zones of conflicting interest, constantly in dispute, scarcely knowing one another, have produced a country more productive, stronger and more fortunate in its life than any of comparable population before. Let him explain that. The explanation, as of everything worth explaining, will be found in something impalpable which has no name and, in the case of Canada, no symbols.

This is the thing — the dumb, unutterable will to create a separate Canadian life and preserve it from the daily infiltration of a friendly neighbor — that has always had to struggle for existence and now goes on trial for its life. Can a nation so oddly conceived and so vaguely dedicated long endure in the dinosaur jungle which we call modern civilization?

#### IV

The answer must be considered in relation to the three factors mentioned — politics, economics and intangibles. In all of them the answer will be given mainly by Canadians but, in very large measure, by the United States.

In politics Canada has long given its answer. It has contrived a national system compounded of the British parliamentary method and American federalism, but it has gone much further. To achieve independence from Britain, without breaking the ties of blood altogether, it has invented and compelled the creation of the British Commonwealth of free nations. To live between the rival pressures of Britain and the United States it has become a sort of national middleman, a master of compromise and conciliation in external as in domestic affairs. By compulsion at first, then by calculation and finally by habit it has sought and found a middle course between the giants of the prewar world.

This experience will be useful in the future but not between the new giants, for in their contest we have already chosen sides irrevocably as we were forced to do by geography, as we insisted on doing by conviction. It is in this new situation that the United States can most effectively influence our political future.

Given our ability to manage our own political system, we require from the United States a clear understanding and acceptance of our destiny as a nation truly independent not only in form but in fact. It is not sufficient to say, as Americans say so glibly, that this already is understood and accepted. Certainly it was understood and accepted in the easy days of the past. But in the hard days, in the grinding clash of power when

almost any means (especially with your friends) can be excused if it seems to forward the ultimate ends — in this entirely new era outside its past experience will the United States avoid the natural temptation to push around a small neighbor essential to its own safety and always a major factor in its strategic calculations?

Will it realize, in short, that a strong Canada is essential to its own strength and that Canada will be strongest in total independence, weakest if outside interference brings resistance, antagonism and domestic disunity?

This part of the general answer, and it is a very large part, the United States must supply. It cannot be said that the United States has answered yet. Having taken Canada's old position for granted so long, it has not begun to think Canada's new position through. If it will only stop for a moment to think about Canada, instead of concentrating its gaze always somewhere else, I have no doubt of the answer. But so far, due largely to our silence and assured stability, Canada has been the American people's great blind spot.

Economically the answer is simpler and both nations will share it about equally. Since it cannot expect to earn enough cash in Europe to maintain its old volume of exports there — that is, in proportion to its greatly expanded production — Canada will try to increase its exports to the United States. Here it has been buy-

ing twice as much as it sold and hence the current dollar shortage. To bring this trade into something like balance two things are needed — increased production in Canada of the things the United States can use, and increased willingness in the United States to buy.

The Canadian government has taken control over the direction of all industrial expansion so that imports of American capital goods may go mainly into industries that can sell in the United States. The United States has gone far in the Geneva trade treaties to open its markets to Canada. But these measures are far from adequate.

The Canadian government, therefore, is seeking again the reciprocity plan, the drastic over-all reduction in tariffs which the Canadian people, in the worst error of their history, rejected in 1911. When that project comes to the point of decision, after the Presidential election is out of the way, the United States must consider several facts: that in the short term Canada will be the United States' only major partner in supplying goods to Europe under the Marshall Plan, but not unless Canada overcomes its dollar shortage; that in the long term a prosperous and steady Canada is important to the United States militarily and politically; and that Canada is its largest market and holds \$5 billion of its investments, more than all Latin America combined.

Two other things need to be under-

stood. First, Canada is not seeking an exclusive customs union with the United States, such as is favored by some prominent American statesmen of the protectionist and isolationist school. That would mean inheriting American tariffs against the world, it might damage Canada's overseas markets and it would certainly transfer Canada's sovereign economic policy from Ottawa to Washington.

Second, the economic integration of this continent, delayed for more than a century by stupidity on both sides of the line, does not imply a later political integration. Reciprocity is not the way to annexation but the surest way to avoid it. No large body of Canadians has ever favored joining the United States except in times of economic distress caused by the closing of the American market. Returning prosperity, created by abundant trade over the border, has always extinguished any serious movement for union.

In the present difficult period we behold the familiar spectacle of the extreme Right in Canada trying to dam up this trade on the assumption, mathematically absurd, that Canada can live largely on the diminished British market; and the extreme Left trying to divorce Canada's economy from the United States because the latter is capitalistic, and to integrate Canada with any other country, however distant, poor and uncomplementary, because it is socialistic. These extreme courses, which are the

same thing under different ideological wrappings, will become definite dangers if the United States refuses to buy far more Canadian goods. Economically, the United States policy here will be decisive.

When it comes to the intangibles the answer must be all Canada's. In a word, is the instinct of Canadianism strong enough to stand the new political and economic strains?

## v

This question is not to be answered lightly. Unless the world climate changes sharply for the better, the strains will be increasingly hard to bear. The very friendliness of the United States, though it can offer us economic relief by trade, though it can refuse to put political pressure on us direct, will press on us innocently from another side by making union with such a good neighbor seem more and more desirable. The subconscious belief among Canadians that they can solve all their problems if necessary by joining the United States has run all through our history and will certainly re-emerge in times like these. (As if the United States had solved everything!) The opposite sentiment, the old fear and suspicion of Americans, has appeared stridently in our Parliament already.

The pull of these contraries, if the siege lasts long, could shake the country to its foundation. The whole question is the strength of the foundation, and the foundation is abstract and cannot be tested or measured

except by trial. A supreme trial is now assured.

For all these reasons, despite its prosperity, its living standard and its basic wealth, Canada is in crisis. This is always a healthy place for Canada to be in. Canada was created by crisis, it won its independence in crisis, its greatest years of progress were the years of crisis in two world wars. It is the tough, flexible, dumb-child of crisis. Long bemused by the theory of the easy life, which flows across its southern frontier, it must now seek its own clear, cold life-springs on the northern slope of the planet. There it has always found its strength.

This curious national organism, one of the few points of stability on the map, is being hardened and tempered already by the first phases of its trial. It is following its own instincts. It is contriving its own methods of cure. It is remodeling its economy. It is re-shaping its society. Sooner than its neighbor it is climbing out of the postwar fools' paradise.

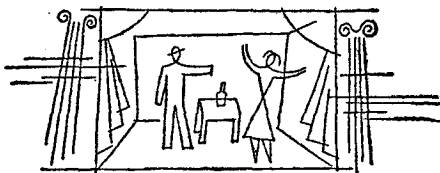
Canada, I venture to predict, will come through the trial stronger than ever and in a few years, as during the war, the United States will ask how so few people have accomplished so much. This I cannot prove by facts but only by the record of the past and the character of my country in the present — only by an abstraction which no foreigner will understand and no Canadian will explain. In the alliance of free nations we shall remain the silent partner.

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# THE THEATRE

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

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## THIS WAY TO THE SIDESHOW

WHENEVER the late Florenz Ziegfeld was at a loss what to do in one of his *Follies*, it was his wont to bring on the girls. Whenever a producer, whether of musicals or drama, is nowadays at a similar loss for an idea, he brings on the Negroes. It is thus that we have had them in everything from Aristophanes to Shakespeare, from Gilbert and Sullivan to Shaw, and from *The Show-Off* and *Rain* to *Arsenic and Old Lace*, not to mention in various shaky play and show scripts originally intended for white actors which have been optimistically hocus-focussed into vehicles for black. We have also had numerous singular adaptations of plays ancient and modern, some going to such extremes as, in the instance of *Anna Lucasta*, converting Polish characters into Negroes and in other instances presenting the latter as even High Church British. It will probably be any day now that some producer will get the notion that the Black and

Tans must have been Ethiopians and will bequeath us O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* with an Afroyank cast.

The so-called Experimental Theatre's presentation several months ago of a version of Gorki's *The Lower Depths* which transplanted the scene from Russia to North Carolina and altered the Muscovite characters into Dixie Negroes accordingly had about the same daring experimental value as pouring ketchup on beans. The enterprise, indeed, seemed to be directed less toward any real experiment than toward the possible chance, if it were to indicate any signs of box-office life, of moving it over to Broadway and cashing in. A modern classic was turned into a minor showshop item; a drama of Russian character, Russian viewpoint, and Russian soul was worked into a Catfish Row entertainment, minus only a score.

The friendly contention in these cases is that, after all, human beings are at bottom much alike and that consequently there is nothing particularly violative of such a play as Gorki's in changing its characters from Rus-

sians to American Negroes. It is a pretty argument, one will admit, but I still am possessed of the peculiar notion that the Chinese, let us say, differ somewhat from the Scandinavians and even the Slavs from Durham, N. C., blacks. There are, of course, superficial identities in nations and races, but the identities stop there, and to adapt, however freely, a drama that is essentially as Slavic as Gorki's to a people as Slavic as corn pone is almost as far-fetched as adapting *Lady Windermere's Fan* to such persons as figure in *Tobacco Road*.

It is a further friendly point that, in order to enjoy any such adaptation, one should dismiss the original play from mind and accept the presentation simply on its own. I have the weakness to confess that I am not up to any such agreeable suspension of judgment. If the bill of the evening is specifically stated to be an adaptation of *The Lower Depths*, I somehow keep thinking of *The Lower Depths* and not of any completely independent effort. The problem of dismissing Gorki, or even of being conscious of him at only widely spaced intervals, is beyond me; and I suspect that it would be the same if a playwright were to appropriate the Russian without credit and offer the exhibit as his own.

It is all very well and proper for college boys to undertake such adaptation pranks for their annual shows, but it is hardly justifiable in the case of an organization that makes large pretences of artistic dramatic experi-

ment under the aegis of still another organization that elects to call itself by the impressive name, the American National Theatre and Academy. I am not so snobbish as to believe that interesting experiment and the box-office may not conceivably go hand in hand. But I suffer a considerable skepticism about any organization like this one which has demonstrated pretty clearly that it is thinking of the box-office at the expense of sound and reputable dramatic exploration.

What interest there was in the presentation lay obliquely in contemplating the humor of Southern Negroes posturing a deep Russian introspection, grievously lamenting the effects of alcoholic indulgence, and otherwise comporting themselves, with imposed straight faces, like soul-tortured Slavs.

## II

The Jean-Paul Sartre fanatics had a time of it sustaining their enthusiasm for their hero in the face of his *The Respectful Prostitute*. That they were able to put up the show they did is a credit to their loyalty, if maybe not to their powers of critical inquiry. Having extolled him as the redeemer of the modern drama, they were slightly abashed by what, though they cautiously admitted it only by implication, was little more than another obvious melodrama, at times very close to parody, in which a Negro in the American South is falsely accused of the rape of a white woman and in which the customary pressure is brought to bear to prove his guilt



in order to cover up a crime committed by a white man.

It is, of course, possible for a creditable dramatist to write a bad play; we have had sufficient instances of merit suddenly and for the nonce descended to mediocrity; but I doubt if any playwright as surpassingly worthy as Sartre has been touted by his disciples to be has produced one quite so impeachable as this. Quite aside from its other infirmities, it indicates in its supposedly super-cerebral author an ignorance beyond the melodramatically superficial of subject matter and a speciousness of approach that turn it here and there not into something merely approximating caricature but caricature outright. And without the veneer of the Existentialist philosophy, which previously has bedazzled the high-strung into imagining that there was much more to his plays than the less twittery could manage to detect in them, it shows up both itself and its author in a sizzling light, as his idolators in France and England have been reluctantly and with pain embarrassed to admit, and as even his local votaries have had some visible agony in disbelieving. That, however, despite their momentary hesitations they will presently and with all the old fervor return to the tonic is not hard, if one reflects on past statistics in similar directions, to surmise. It took many years to disillusion the stanch believers in even the Cardiff giant and Henry George.

That Sartre's local constituency was partly deceived by Eva Wolas,

his translator, is to be allowed. The accomplished lady has deleted from his original script a jolt of its imbecility, has edited into it a measure of effect that it was largely without, and has lent it a small share of conviction. As Sartre wrote the play, it was often so ridiculously alien in its approach to its theme that even the French critics had no trouble in sniffing its absurdities and making sport of them. As it now stands, it is still a cut-and-dried lynch melodrama with a few good theatrical moments but, while an improvement upon the original, nothing that a third-rate American playwright could not write, and indeed has.

In such reflections on Sartre's standing, I confine myself relevantly to his dramatic efforts; his novels are apart from the appraisal. It is these plays of his, so admired by his infatuates, that in the main present themselves to drama criticism as so many shoe-box bombs, their dollar alarm clocks ticking like mad and their wires of a startling probability, but minus any real explosives; all, however, prosperously scary to such as do not trouble to investigate them further.

### III

Like truth and pine needles, Miss Eva Le Gallienne crushed to earth will rise again. Though her career in greater measure has been marked by frustration, her ardor is inexhaustible and year after year she persistently springs up to re-court the muse.

Of the firm opinion that Ibsen's plays, like those of some other illustrious dramatists, call for re-writing and re-editing and that she is the girl to do it, she this season, as in the case of *John Gabriel Borkman* last, has volunteered her talents to *Ghosts* and *Hedda Gabler*, with results that approach the bizarre.

"When I visited Oslo in 1938," she says, "I was honored with a first edition of *Ghosts*. Thumbing the pages of the Norwegian script [no language, apparently, is beyond Miss Le Gallienne's facile grasp] I was awed and amazed by the easy flowing dialogue that had vitality, spontaneity, wit and humor so sadly lacking in the translation of William Archer. . . . It is not, as classicists are apt to believe [may one ask what classicists?], stiff, ponderous, and replete with symbolism. In adapting Ibsen from the original Norwegian, I have brought it up to date. People speak in everyday speech, unadorned by pompous phrases of Victorian vintage."

That Archer's translation of the in its time remarkable play is at least in part what Miss Le Gallienne describes it as being (one doubts, among other things, its sad lack of vitality), is to be freely admitted. But that Miss Le Gallienne's version of the play, while grantedly a little more fluid to the contemporary ear, any more assists it is something less than an open question. To bring the speech of a drama of 67 years ago — and one

laid toward the end of the nineteenth century and concerned with problems and points of view peculiar to its immediate period — into a present day flavor is not only to make the play at times slightly ridiculous but to emphasize to its damage its thematic age. When, in this later day of immediate diagnosis and penicillin and fever therapy, it is hoped to invest the once startling subject of syphilis with a current and equal startle by substituting for Archer's Victorian speech dialogue full of such terms and expressions as "let yourself go," "aren't I?" and "bitch" — when such is the fond indulgence, the subject matter, far from being made approximately modern, is made only to seem doubly dated. It avails little to name a horse-car Buick.

But Buick nonetheless she similarly labels *Hedda Gabler*, and with like disturbing consequences. It is not so much that she monkeys with the play's internals; they remain what they originally were. It is rather that she imposes upon it an attempt at a modern acting approach that makes the internals seem out of key and not a little absurd. If she continues in her idiosyncratic manipulation of Ibsen, it probably will not be long now before she will give us another production of *Ghosts* including a team of acrobats and a trained seal, and one of *Hedda* in which she will do a can-can. The lady's resources seemingly know no bounds.

# THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

BY MICHAEL KEARNS

**D**RIVING slowly along a mountain road in West Virginia, a motorist suddenly jams on his brakes as a landslide hits the road ahead of him. It piles onto the highway in a terrifying explosion of dirt and boulders. Then, as the driver sits horrified, a gaunt hill-billy crawls out from the debris. He waves through the spiraling cloud of dust, and yells: "Consarn it! That's the fourth time this morning I've fell outen that cornfield — and I've got eleven more rows to grub!"

The West Virginian gets a perverse pleasure out of spinning yarns like this on himself. He gleefully admits that he never wore shoes until his wedding day, claims that one leg is longer than the other (from walking along hillsides) and affirms that his dandruff is pure hayseed. The tendency to self-deprecation may appear sinister, perhaps even un-American, to chambers of commerce and professional boosters. But the West Virginian realizes, sadly perhaps, that most Americans regard his state as nothing but one great coal mine populated by a motley collection of snake-

worshiping hill-billies. He wards off contempt by telling jokes on himself. He knows, further, that his state is historically and geographically undistinguished. The only thing Robert Ripley could say about it was that it has the world's only monument to an apple.

Statistically, West Virginia is unimpressive. Its size is surpassed by 39 other states. Almost two dozen others have more population. Only Delaware has less inland water area. Geographically, the state is in an awkward position. The most easterly tip is as far east as Rochester; the opposite end is as far west as Michigan's Port Huron. The northern border is north of Pittsburgh; the southern is south of Richmond. From New York to Vermont the West Virginian assumes the rôle of a Southerner. Down South he's a Yankee. Along the Atlantic Coast he's a Westerner; in the West, an Easterner.

Practically no one of importance has come from West Virginia. The state has produced no Presidents, Presidents' wives or Vice-Presidents. Nor has so much as one prominent

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movie star, scientist, writer, artist, admiral, stage or radio personality or national sports champion come from West Virginia. ("Stonewall" Jackson was born in Clarksburg, but that was part of Virginia at the time.)

A West Virginia governor once had his car halted in New York's Times Square by a policeman. The officer grinned at the gathering crowds, pointed dramatically to the chief executive's "No. 1" license plate and shouted happily: "See, there really *is* a car in West Virginia!"

## II

Only the very proud can afford the luxury of poking fun at themselves. And the West Virginian is proud, as only a mountaineer can be. His pride has in it something of the landed Englishman's quiet self-assurance and, paradoxically, something also of the provincial's truculent self-assertiveness. One often hears natives proclaiming they are from "West By-God Virginia!"

Part of this pride stems from history. West Virginia's original settlers spilled over the mountains because they wanted their own homes, because they hated tenant farming, plantation society and slavery. These Irish-English-Scotch pioneers resented their poor-relation position inside the Old Dominion. Virginia's public monies rarely crossed the Blue Ridge. As late as 1812 the state's only two banks were in Richmond, which, for all practical purposes, was as far away as Tibet for the isolated hillmen.

Eastern Virginia used slaves to create inequalities in taxation, legislation and suffrage. Western Virginians hated almost everything about the setup.

Most historians agree that formation of the separate state was logical and inevitable. It had been attempted earlier, when Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Walpole petitioned the King for a fourteenth colony. Later it almost became the state of "Westsylvania." And when the secession movement came along, the western section of Virginia — as Daniel Webster had predicted — quite naturally broke away from its eastern half. The creation of West Virginia in 1863 was the only change of the Civil War that showed on the maps.

Yet the character of West Virginia has been formed less by history than by the mountains. The Mountain State was aptly named. Once self-publicized as "The Little Switzerland of America," it has the highest mean altitude of any state east of the Mississippi. There is a slope of at least 40 per cent to more than one fourth of the state's 15 million acres. West Virginia used to lead the nation in lumber production; it is still second only to Arkansas in hardwood output.

Over half of all the land is forested. Wildcat and great black bear still prowl the underbrush. White-tailed deer are common. Rattlesnakes and copperheads slither about everywhere. Bats hang in grisly clusters from dank, dripping caves. The hills are peopled with everything from rabbits and foxes to squirrels and skunks,

from trout and "cats" to buzzards and bald eagles. Botanists find the back areas a paradise: they have more than 3400 known species of plant life, including great spruce in the mountains and prickly-pear cactus in the desert-like South Branch Valley. One of the few known carnivorous plant growths, the Sundew, thrives in the "glacial bog" of Cranberry Glades. Blueberries grow so lush on a twenty-mile ridge in Randolph County that the crop is never completely harvested. The state also produces a blackberry which continues to mystify scientists — it is thornless in the wild state, but develops thorns immediately after it is cultivated.

These mountains leave indelible impressions on their sons; even the visitor from the city begins to acquire a longer stride soon after coming to West Virginia. His home may have a front entrance fifteen feet higher than the back yard; and the back porch may be level with the chimney-tops of houses a block away. Sidewalks often end in flights of steps up or down to the next street level. The town itself is usually tacked onto hill-sides, after the fashion of villages in Switzerland, Wales, Bavaria and Scotland. Unlike most Americans, the West Virginian is not apt to be much interested in the speed of his new car. The important question is: will it climb? He's adept at hillside parking and at braking with half-clutch at steeply graded intersections.

West Virginians who've never seen a hill-billy, and who live the standard

city life, are nonetheless exposed to all these mountain hazards. Mostly, the natives take the slopes for granted — until they venture abroad onto the tabletops of Indiana or Oklahoma. Or, perhaps, until a southern Florida visitor suddenly pales in fright at a near-vertical avenue the native has always regarded as normal.

There's a real-life double for that farmer in the joke who falls out of his cornfield. He lives on a freak farm in Wayne County. The fields there can only be reached by ladder; mules and plows are hoisted up cliffsides by block and tackle.

### III

The mountains have created the mountaineer. The latter, it should be said at once, bears only the dimmest resemblance to the "shiftless skunk" in jukebox mountain ditties, to the skinny hill-billies in Paul Webb's *Esquire* cartoons, or to Snuffy Smith and Li'l Abner. He is usually tall and long-limbed. He plows his acres on the bias, working his way around stumps and stones. By sweat and faith he grows his own corn, wheat, oats and garden vegetables, often his own tiny patch of stubborn tobacco. He comes close to the ideal of self-sufficiency; he is still pretty much a pioneer.

The mountaineer does quite well without radio and television; his recreation will center around folk dances in barns rather than sambas on packed dance floors. A daily newspaper would be useless to him because his news comes from the country store, more

intimate, factual and fresh than any wire service or columnist could ever make it. His liquor is home-made; it is surprisingly good. As a matter of fact, most of the rude equipment of the mountaineer comes off well in comparison with the luxuries that are taken for granted in urban life. His hand-quilted comforter is as warm as any thermostat-blanket. The forest gives him fuel for the taking. Inflation has made little difference in the mountains. Food comes straight from the good earth — uncontaminated by the hands of a thousand middlemen. He usually has within easy reach the best literature available anywhere: the Holy Bible. He knows the Bible intimately, as he knows his God intimately. God in the mountains is all-powerful, highly personalized and not easy to get away from.

Honesty is taken for granted. Doors are never locked in mountain communities; public opinion is the only policeman. The story of old Andy Argus, as related by the objective *WPA Guidebook to West Virginia*, is a case in point. After his wife's death, Andy was placed on county relief rolls. The indignity was bad enough, but he was particularly perturbed at the size of his weekly check — two dollars. And so the hardy octogenarian hiked and climbed 25 miles over the Smoke Hole Ridge to Franklin. There he told an astounded county agent: "I've come to give ye a refund, because two dollars be too much for me. One dollar a week be plenty — ye

see, I don't like to be extravygant with public funds."

A small part of the cartoon legend is true. Mountain girls marry young and age early. They and their men call a bag a "poke," pronounce chair as "cheer," transform care into "keer" and get into "git." Sentiment is liable to be earthy. Ardent WPA writers doing research among musty autograph albums in the hills uncovered such realistic classics as:

My love for you will always flow  
Like water down a 'tater row.

'Tis sweet to kiss, but Oh! how bitter  
To kiss an old tobacco-spitter!

A book could be written about mountain medicines. Acidic oak-stump water is used for warts. Catnip tea is taken for colds and colic, blackberry tea for dysentery. Water dipped from a stream before sunrise on Ash Wednesday is used to cure rheumatism. Gold beads strung around the neck are worn for a sore throat, rattlesnake bones for a fever, freshly-chewed tobacco for coaxing poison from bee sting and tobacco juice for earache.

Although they are tillers of the soil, the mountaineers comprise only a portion of West Virginia's farmers: all of them together own more than half of all the land. Three fourths of the farms are owner-operated and the latest available statistics indicate that West Virginia farmers are freer from debt than the farmers of any other state in the union.

## IV

What of the coal mines? One census survey showed that West Virginia may be divided into three groups, all about equal in number: those engaged in farming, in manufacturing and in coal mining. Coal is not King.

But West Virginia does produce more bituminous coal than any other state. And the "black diamond," which Emerson once described as "portable climate," has influenced West Virginia almost as much as the mountains. Its influence has been especially great in the field of labor relations. To the men who worked in them, the mines used to be little better than concentration camps. The coal operators ruled with an iron hand, and warfare between miners and deputized thugs was open and bloody. Mine disasters occurred regularly. Bureau of Mines statistics (which do not list disasters in which fewer than twenty men die) record explosions and cave-ins in West Virginia in which 20, 46, 50, 56, 81, 91, 112, 119, 181 and 361 men were killed. The 361 deaths at Monongah in 1907 probably comprised the worst disaster in the history of American mining.

The first miners were mostly poverty-stricken refugees from Europe, who were shipped into the mountains by the operators—who had, in many instances, paid the men's passage to this country. Their dingy homes were without any pretence of sanitation. When the men were not

fighting the armed company police they were fighting disease. Neither of the fights was very easy, especially since they were perpetually in debt. They were paid in scrip money that was good only at the company stores.

The typical coal-mining village is not very attractive even today. Coal dust covers the houses, the grass and the streets. It cakes the windows and gets into the food; it makes cleanliness almost unattainable. And it is partly responsible for the high incidence of tuberculosis.

Today the company stores have to compete with independent shops, scrip has almost gone, the union has boosted wage scales, and safety measures in the mines, though still capable of improvement, are vastly better than they were. The company police are neither as numerous nor as brutal as formerly. But the heritage of the past has made the West Virginia miner independent, suspicious of strangers, union-worshipping and pretty much disdainful of any considerations not immediately related to his life in the mines. He drinks hard and curses even harder. Personally, he is apt to be sullen and bitter, implacably hostile toward the coal operators and vaguely suspicious of the whole outside world.

Not many emigrants from Europe have come to West Virginia in the past 25 years. According to one reliable source, 90 per cent of all West Virginians today are native-born; and in 20 of the state's 55 counties the figure is as high as 98 per cent. Moreover, the few Europeans who do move



into West Virginia move into the state's major cities — Huntington, Charleston, Wheeling, Clarksburg, Fairmont and Morgantown — rather than into the mining communities.

The growth of the cities reflects the growing industrialization of the state. In time, if the process continues, the stereotype of the West Virginian may even change from a hill-billy to a machinist. Right now, in addition to supplying about 25 per cent of the nation's bituminous coal, West Virginia produces vast amounts of natural gas, petroleum, iron and glass. The state is supplying all the raw materials which go into the manufacture of nylon stockings. The Kanawha Valley (where Daniel Boone once served as a lieutenant-colonel in the militia) is one of the most heavily industrialized areas in the country. West Virginia today has a population density greater than the mother state of Virginia and 70 per cent above the national average.

In the Kanawha Valley the citizens can point with pride to the world's largest flat glass plant and the world's largest synthetic rubber factory. Anti-freezes, alcohols, chlorine, ammonia and lucite also come out of this region in enormous quantities. Wheeling is a center of America's tin plate and steel production, as well as the home of one of the country's most popular chewing tobaccos. The state's mineral resources are topped in dollar value only by those of Texas, California and Pennsylvania.

In recent years the state has de-

veloped a new type of urban dweller, a sort of commuter-in-reverse. Thousands of West Virginians have taken to living in the cities and commuting to work on the outskirts, where most of the industrial plants are situated. This new species, described by one writer as "clean, neat, newspaper-read, opinionated," has not yet succumbed to the influence of the hills, but it is probably only a matter of time before he begins to walk, think and speak like the rest of the state's citizens. In the meantime his labors are helping to turn out clothespins, coin nickel, overalls, chinaware, porcelain, packed meat, bluing, pop bottles, gasoline, petroleum, electric power, plate glass, box cars and an amazing variety of synthetic chemicals. Right now West Virginia has a higher per capita income-tax payment than any southern state except Virginia or Florida.

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Outside the big cities, in most parts of the country, social life is, to a large extent, centered around the churches. About one fourth of West Virginia's citizens are listed as church members, with the Methodists in the majority, the Baptists second and the Catholics third. But the church as a social institution in the state cannot compare with the lodges and fraternities which have naturally taken roots among a clannish people. The Loyal Order of the Moose, one of the country's leading good-guy groups, is an important institution in West Virginia: only five other states contribute more mem-

bers. The national Supreme Governor of the Moose, one F. Roy Yoke, is a clan-loving mountaineer who is also active in the Masons, Rotary Club, Elks, Knights of Pythias and several similar organizations.

The ballet, theatre, symphony and other arts do not, on the whole, come off very well in the state: the sophisticates generally have to go "outside" to get what they want. Schooling, however, is far from primitive. There are twelve colleges and universities in the state, including West Virginia University, a public institution which is coeducational and has a high academic rating. The enrollment at WVU is now close to 7000, about twice what it was before the war. About one third of the student body is working its way through school.

The main come-on for tourists are the thirteen state parks and six state forests, all of which are carefully preserved in a rustic condition by an alert conservation commission: they range in size from 30 acres (Pinnacle Rock) to 12,915 acres (Cooper's Rock). Watoga State Park sets aside two weeks each November in which visitors may hunt deer with bows and arrows.

Like the sea, the mountains get into a man's blood. West Virginians who have left the state develop terrific cases of home-sickness. Forgetting the poison ivy and sumac, the deadly snakes and maddening insects which

infest the state, they build up a mental image of sulphur springs, roaring streams, dark, hidden caves, placid river valleys and Olympian mountain tops. The state motto, "Mountaineers Always Free," accurately expresses the feeling of West Virginians for their state.

Perhaps this feeling of local patriotism and total independence is best summarized in a letter written almost a century ago by one James Trotter. Back in 1855 he and his brothers shared a contract to deliver mail in what is now West Virginia's Tygarts Valley. Unfortunately, a series of heavy snows prevented the brothers from delivering the mail on time. A group of snowbound mountaineers finally complained to Washington about the long time the Trotters were taking. Postal officials transmitted the protest to the brothers. James Trotter, who was manifestly not taking anything from anybody, took his pen in hand and set down the following reply:

Mr. Postmaster General,  
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

If you knock the gable end out of hell and back it up against Cheat Mountain and rain fire and brimstone for 40 days and nights, it won't melt the snow enough to get your damned mail through on time!

Yours truly,  
Trotter Brothers,  
By James Trotter

# THE ORDEAL OF HERBERT HOOVER

BY EUGENE LYONS

OVER the coffee cups one night recently I steered the conversation to our only living ex-President. I was at the time working on a book on the subject and therefore keen to sample the misconceptions about Herbert Hoover held by various groups of Americans. That particular company, I expected, would be rewarding, and I was not disappointed. Our hosts and their guests would have described themselves as liberals, and hence by definition relieved of all restraint and fairness in attacking Hoover.

One after another they trotted out an assortment of mythical stories and libelous imputations — not in partisan passion but casually and calmly, as if they were alluding to scientific facts. It was not amusing but fascinating to watch that display of self-righteous prejudice in action.

Avoiding the temptation to dispute generalized accusations, I tried to pin them down to specific charges. The fumbling that followed was pathetic. Most of the alleged data on which their anti-Hoover sentiments

rested had faded out with time; the sentiments themselves remained intact. But being conscientious folk, fearful of indecent exposure of bias, they did their best to recall definite allegations. From these I choose a few at random, simply to indicate their flavor.

“But didn’t Hoover refuse to help the Red Cross in the drought period?” one man asked.

He was a lawyer active in social work. Evidently the “heartlessness” of a President who opposed a humanitarian organization had rankled in his soul for a long time. I had read and heard scores of charges against Hoover but that one was new and I made a mental note to trace it to its source. This is what I subsequently found:

In the summer of 1930, as if nature itself were conspiring to deepen the national economic crisis, one of the worst droughts in our history hit the Midwest and the South. President Hoover took a great many and, as it turned out, effective remedial steps, among them the assignment of certain phases of the drought relief work

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EUGENE LYONS, *editor of THE AMERICAN MERCURY from 1939 to 1944, is now a roving editor of the Reader's Digest. In this article he has adapted materials from his new book, Our Unknown Ex-President, A Portrait of Herbert Hoover, which is being published this month by Doubleday. He has also written Assignment in Utopia and The Red Decade.*

to the Red Cross. He asked Congress for a special \$30 million appropriation, but this was over and above the Red Cross needs, which were to be met by appeals to the public.

At that point Democratic Senator Harrison of Arkansas introduced a bill granting \$20 million to the Red Cross. In this he was acting in defiance of all the officials of the organization, who assured Congress that they neither needed nor wanted government handouts. They preferred to finance themselves through private contributions and had no doubts that the response would be adequate.

When President Hoover attacked and in the end defeated the Harrison proposal he was acting with the consent and cooperation of the Red Cross. In the final check-up the organization used only twelve of the fifteen million dollars it raised for drought relief. But the episode was exploited by Hoover's detractors to fortify their fable of a President callous to suffering. And here, at a dinner party seventeen years after the events, that fable was still in robust bloom!

"I don't recall the details," another guest declared, "but I do know that Hoover was mixed up in some ugly financial scandal . . . in London, I think."

He thought right. There *was* a scandal, back in 1902, and Hoover was deeply mixed up in it. He was going on 28 at the time and had just become a junior partner in an old and respected mine engineering firm, Bewick, Moreing & Company. The

senior partners happened to be abroad hunting big game and the young American was in charge of the London office when the firm suffered a terrible blow. One morning Hoover found on his desk a twenty-page letter in which the company accountant, a highly trusted man named Rowe, confessed to an array of dramatic defalcations. For some time Rowe had been secretly speculating in American railroad stocks and had resorted to fraud to cover his losses, now amounting to about a million dollars. He had issued forged stock certificates, had forged checks and used other thieving devices, with clients of the firm as his victims.

Hoover was unable to contact his seniors. The one thing certain was that Bewick, Moreing & Company were legally in the clear. While Rowe had used the prestige of the firm, he had acted in his individual capacity and not as an officer. Hoover had to act on his own responsibility. In announcing the confession he also pledged that he and his partners, though under no legal obligations, would make good every tuppence of the losses to their clients.

This demonstration of an almost quixotic honesty thrilled London and the company's reputation was greatly enhanced. The senior partners concurred with the young man's decision, which cost him all his private savings and kept him broke for several years to come. The affair became one of the proud stories of business probity in the mining world.

Yet these facts were somehow tortured out of shape in later years so that the hero of the piece, amazingly, emerged as its villain. Here it was being used again, 46 years later, to besmirch a former President!

"All right, let's get closer to home," the lawyer returned to the assault. "How can anyone forgive Hoover for shooting down and killing the bonus marchers in cold blood?"

I knew that would come up — it always does — and proceeded to recount the essential facts of that episode. Our lawyer seemed honestly disturbed; he had heard the charge repeated so often and so precisely that he did not doubt its truth. Actually President Hoover, far from causing bloodshed, put an end to it by his intercession.

In June and July, 1932, some 12,000 real and alleged veterans encamped in Washington to bring pressure for a huge bonus. They were treated with the utmost patience by local authorities, who were aware that extremist leaders were hoping to provoke an incident. At Hoover's request, Congress voted return fares for those willing to go home and about 6000 availed themselves of the offer. On July 28 the extremists at last had their "incident."

About 50 Negro "marchers" occupied some old buildings scheduled for razing to make way for public construction (to give hundreds of men jobs). When the police requested the squatters to move, about a thousand of the men camped outside the city

limits suddenly concentrated on the scene and a riot was under way. Two policemen, surrounded and endangered, began to shoot, killing two men and wounding others.

It was at this point, as a result of the bloodshed, that the Commissioners of the District of Columbia appealed to President Hoover in writing to call out Federal troops. Hoover had little choice in the matter; refusal might have had tragic consequences. With the arrival of 600 American soldiers, all violence ceased. The soldiers carried no deadly weapons. Whether General MacArthur, who was in command, went beyond his instructions in dispersing all the encamped "marchers" instead of merely restoring order in the city, is a moot point.

But the rock-bottom fact — in the words of General Patrick J. Hurley, who was then Secretary of War and in the thick of the affair — is that "not one single shot was fired nor was any person seriously injured after the arrival of United States troops." The incessant allegation that Hoover "shot down bonus marchers" is an unqualified falsehood.

A liberal lady, a high-minded person who would not ordinarily malign a prominent fellow-American, then referred with an air of triumph to the fact that Hoover had "robbed" some Chinese. She had heard that not once but a dozen times, she assured me.

"So did I," I replied. "But again the story is not merely untrue, it's the opposite of the truth. Hoover

helped *prevent* the robbing of those Chinese."

And I told the story in brief. At the turn of the century, just after the Boxer uprisings, Hoover was managing a number of coal and other properties in northern China. He was present when an agent of the foreign stockholders in a memorandum of agreement assigned blocs of stock to certain prominent Chinese financiers. Soon thereafter control of the properties was acquired by Belgian interests, which proceeded to repudiate the agreement. Hoover refused to remain as manager.

The Chinese sued the Belgians in a London court. Hoover appeared only as a witness and his testimony was decisive in winning a decision for the Chinese. Decades later, however, the affair was presented in America in an inside-out upside-down version alleging that Hoover had swindled those Chinese!

One of the principals in that case was Tong Shao-yi, twice prime minister of China and universally respected. Horrified by the distortion of the facts, he issued an eloquent statement. Not only had Hoover's conduct been honorable throughout, he showed, but China was grateful for his courageous defense of its interests. Yet here we were, being apprised by a kind-hearted lady that Hoover had "robbed" the Chinese!

Our host then made a contribution. Hoover, he reminded us, had used food "as a weapon against the Russian Revolution." He was unable, of

course, to make this charge more explicit.

Actually it was Hoover, even while the Versailles conference was under way, who presented to President Wilson a plan for feeding Russians on a non-political basis and selected Dr. Fridtjof Nansen to head the project. It was no fault of Hoover's that the plan did not work out. During the brief Communist régime in Hungary under Bela Kun, relief shipments were halted by order of the Supreme Council, of which Hoover was not a member. The Council wanted to stop 25 carloads of food en route to Budapest at the moment Bela Kun took over, but they were delivered on Hoover's insistence.

Two years later, in 1921, when he was Secretary of Commerce, Hoover organized large-scale Russian famine relief through the American Relief Administration. When that job was finished, the Council of People's Commissars presented him with a decorative scroll, dated July 10, 1923, expressing extravagant appreciation and attesting that "millions of people of all ages were saved from death" by the Hoover organization. Maxim Gorki in a letter to Hoover expressed "complete satisfaction with the humanitarian work" of the ARA. The Communist charges against the ARA are of later vintage and wholly propagandist.

Thus the strange indictment was unfolded over our coffee cups that night, every clause an invention or a falsification.

## II

No man can spend over fifty years in international business, worldwide relief operations and politics, as Herbert Hoover has done, without making serious blunders. The strange legend of his all-around villainy, however, does not rest on real blunders but on imaginary crimes. Its contention is not merely that Hoover has been wrong but that he has been wrong-headed and wicked. The attacks have not been directed primarily against his views and judgments but against his character and motives. What we are confronted with, in short — what this article is concerned with — is not principled political disagreement but unprincipled personal smearing.

When particular accusations are followed to their point of origin, as in the matter of the million-dollar defalcation or the Red Cross affair, it appears that laudable conduct has been “processed” to look like infamy unlimited. This happens too often to be accidental. One suspects deliberate spite. In fact, Hoover has been the object of planned vilification on an unprecedented scale — under circumstances which made the efforts incredibly successful.

The most important of those circumstances, of course, was the great depression. Fated to continue for eleven years, until solved by the advent of war, it started in the eighth month of Hoover’s administration. A distressed and frightened people needed a scapegoat for their sorrows and the

man in the White House was “it.”

He had no more to do with the collapse of the boom than the King of Siam; less to do with it than some of the men — big Wall Street operators of Democratic persuasion, for instance — who rushed to attack him. Hoover had been among the few, indeed, who warned against the speculative orgy and sought in vain to curb it. But there was no place for logic in the tornado of fright and anger. A President became the whipping boy of the nation.

Another of those circumstances was Hoover’s own character. A deep native shyness reinforced by a Quaker upbringing left Hoover with a paralyzing aversion to personal squabbling. He never lacked moral courage to defend his views and policies, but he was psychologically disarmed when it came to defending *himself*. Where men like Al Smith or Franklin Roosevelt relished a personal scrap, Hoover shrank from it. He suffered more indignities in unhappy silence than any President before or after.

When angered associates urged him to respond to ugly insults, Hoover merely shrugged his shoulders in hurt disgust. He had more pressing things to do, he insisted, than deny that he had robbed Chinese or promoted fake mines or remained indifferent to the travail of the unemployed. “If the American people choose to believe such nonsense,” he once remarked to a secretary, “there is nothing I can do about it.” According to the Quaker precept you can ignore per-



sonal smears "if you're right with God" — an ideal precept but not ideally suited to the rough-and-tumble of politics.

Hoover's passivity under attack, deriving from his innermost nature, and the troubled times combined to make the work of his detractors supremely effective. Their every blow left a permanent mark; the wildest inventions and disparagements "stuck." Three main agencies or groups belabored his character simultaneously, each drawing strength from the others and together adding up to an engine of derogation without match in all political history.

The first of these was the press division of the Democratic party, under command of the late Charles Michelson. The second was a group of authors who launched a series of anti-Hoover books in quick succession — a concentrated literary offensive beyond anything to which an American President had ever been subjected. The third was the Communist Party and its fellow-travelers, who with the depression achieved their maximum influence on American public opinion.

### III

Probably no phrase in all political history has been as long and as lustily exploited to discredit a national figure as "prosperity around the corner." For more than fifteen years orators, editorial writers, cartoonists, even historians have played variations on that theme to mock Herbert Hoover.

What, in all conscience, is the crime

imputed to him in those awful words? Simply that he seized upon symptoms of improvement in the fluctuating economic picture to restore some confidence in a bewildered and despairing people. How does that phrase differ in essence from Franklin Roosevelt's reassurance that "we have nothing to fear but fear itself"? Both Chief Executives in their fashion spoke out against defeatism, for which one has been ridiculed and the other acclaimed.

But the telltale fact about the celebrated "prosperity around the corner" — a fact not one American in a hundred thousand knows — is that Hoover never uttered those words. They were invented and ascribed to him somewhere in those busy workshops, covering almost a whole floor of the National Press Building in Washington, presided over by Michelson.

Those amazing workshops were unique in the annals of politics. Other Presidents had been vigorously attacked by the party out of power, but never before had all the techniques of modern public relations and promotion been employed for the purpose in such organized, systematized style, on such a vast scale and over such a long period.

By September 1930 the undertaking had scarcely found its full stride. But already, in an article published that month, Frank R. Kent of the *Baltimore Sun*, one of the most intelligent and liberal-minded of the capital correspondents, could describe it as "the most elaborate, expensive, effi-

cient and effective political propaganda machine ever operated in the country by any party, organization, association or league." Michelson's sole purpose, he wrote, "was to 'smear' Mr. Hoover and his administration. That is what he is there for and all he is there for."

At another point Mr. Kent declared that the Michelson operation was "an illuminating illustration of the amazing power of unopposed propaganda in skillful hands." The key word is "unopposed." The fact is that neither Hoover nor his government nor his party fought back. They possessed no machinery for counter-propaganda.

In due time Roosevelt would also come under violent attack — by some of the same men who set up and financed the Michelson enterprise. But he would dispose of battalions of defenders and counterattackers: not only the experienced Michelson machine but hundreds of special public-relations officials on the payrolls of the teeming New Deal agencies. Hoover had no such defenders and believed, moreover, that it was beneath the dignity of a President of the United States to take cognizance of personal smearing.

Later there were those who pretended that the Michelson workshops had been a reaction to the economic slump or an answer to the President's "fumbling" of depression problems. In truth the project was in working order about three months after Hoover's inauguration, which is to

say before the market crash. The offensive was mounted long before its promoters and financial angels had the faintest knowledge what they would be called upon to attack.

Normally, after a presidential defeat, the Democratic party retired into a hibernation from which it awoke only in the fourth year, when a new election loomed. It was Hoover's epic hard luck that this pattern of behavior should be smashed after his victory in 1928. John J. Raskob and other moneyed backers of Al Smith decided to organize for immediate and continuous battle.

From a routine bureau the Democratic press division was converted into a costly and high-powered propaganda plant. A shrewd politician, Jouett Shouse, was hired as general manager and Charley Michelson, a newsman seasoned in the service of the Hearst press and the *New York World*, as production chief; each of them was paid \$25,000 a year and expenses.

Raskob himself primed the pump with several hundred thousand dollars, the Du Ponts and other Big Business leaders chipped in generously and that unique political establishment became a fact. Nearly \$3 million was raised for the good work. While part of this kitty went to cover campaign deficits, more than \$2 million went to oil the wheels of the propaganda machine — the largest political expenditure *between campaigns* in American history. It did the assigned job so well that the same men

subsequently forked over additional millions to undo its effects. The Homeric joke is that Raskob, the Du Ponts and their brethren fathered the Liberty League — and put the same Jouett Shouse in command.

Two novel features of the Michelson undertaking should be noted. The first is that it was not directed especially against the Republican party but specifically against one man, Herbert Hoover. The theory, and a mighty smart one for all its indecency, was that some Republicans, too, could be turned against their standard-bearer, who was certain to run for reelection.

The second is that the systematic personal offensive was not soft-pedalled after its victim had been ousted from the White House; on the contrary, it was even stepped up and infinitely refined, until Hoover was turned into a synonym for all the sins and fears and indignations of a bitter passage in history.

The crisis in national morale during the Hoover administration was as serious as war itself. It demanded some measure of unity, some curbing of the partisan spirit. But in all the millions of ghost-written words produced in the Michelson factory there was not one paragraph of constructive criticism; not one expression of genuine sympathy, understanding and encouragement for the hard-pressed Chief Executive. The job was conducted wholly in the spirit of high-powered salesmen tearing down a competing product. Hoover was con-

tinually and simultaneously lambasted for extravagance when he spent money for public works and other relief projects, for callous stinginess when he opposed pork-barrel zeal in Congress. His every move in meeting unprecedented conditions was as a matter of routine lampooned and obstructed; his every word and act was expertly “processed” into ammunition for continuous mudgunning.

The principal product of the Michelson workshops was so skillfully fashioned, so fortified by endless repetition, that it persists to this day. It was the myth of a President who “did nothing.” Not, mind you, one who did the wrong things but one who rejected responsibility while his country went to hell. It was a brutal and indecent invention that infuriated those around Hoover who feared he might be crushed by the staggering weight of his responsibilities.

Of all the personal attacks hurled at him from all sides in the second election campaign, this was the only one President Hoover deigned to answer. Speaking at Fort Wayne, Indiana, on October 12, 1932, he said:

During my public life I have believed that sportsmanship and statesmanship called for the elimination of harsh personalities between opponents. . . . I shall say now the one harsh word that I have uttered in public office. I hope it will be the last that I shall have to say.

When you are told that the President of the United States, who by the most sacred trust of our nation is the President of all the people, a man of your own blood and upbringing, has sat in the White House for the last three years of your misfortune

without troubling to know your burdens, without heart-aches over your miseries and casualties, without summoning every avenue of skillful assistance irrespective of party or view, without using every ounce of his strength and straining his every nerve to protect and help, without using every possible agency of democracy that would bring aid, without putting aside personal ambition and humbling his pride of opinion, if it would serve — then I say to you that such statements are deliberate, intolerable falsehoods.

In his autobiography, *The Ghost Speaks*, Michelson lightly flipped off the charge that his factory smeared President Hoover. But a few pages further he alluded casually to “the gloomy occupant of the White House whom we referred to as *the author of the depression*.” Perhaps he was right — “smear” seems a mild word for such an injustice.

Semantics, in point of fact, played a large part in the Michelson techniques. The shameless phrase “the Hoover depression” is about as imbecilic as “the Teddy Roosevelt earthquake” in California or the “Truman blizzard” of 1947 would be.

#### IV

Space does not allow me to do more than refer briefly to the other instruments and agencies of attack which contributed weightily to the ordeal of Herbert Hoover.

In *Collier's* for February 20, 1932, Arthur Train, a first-rate lawyer as well as writer, took apart what he called the “library of scurrilous books” against Hoover. The most reckless of the poisonous confections,

by an Englishman residing in the United States, John Hamill, was called *The Strange Career of Mr. Hoover — Under Two Flags*. Appropriately, it was published by a twice convicted dealer in pornographic books, who peddled it as part of a filth package called *Faro's Famous Dozen*.

A more unprincipled hodge-podge of lies and forgeries can hardly be imagined. Soon after its publication Hamill himself repudiated his handiwork in a notarized confession running to 189 pages, a photostat copy of which I have read. He and his associates had no political axes to grind; they were simply out to make a quick dollar. Hamill showed how “documents” were falsified; how Hoover's words were quoted out of context to convey meanings opposite to their intentions.

As a sensational and profitable best-seller the book did not come off, but its most outrageous lies took root and have proliferated ever since. Disowned as a tissue of falsehoods and malice — the work of “ghouls” as the author himself put it — the opus has remained the central reservoir of dirt for attacks on Hoover. As late as July 10, 1944 a pro-Communist smear-sheet called *In Fact* (a copy of which is before me) devoted several columns to vilification of Hoover, presenting as “inside news” a few shovelfuls of the decayed stuff from the Hamill pages.

The other books, in Train's words, derived from “the same polluted

source." One of them, by a small-bore Tammany hanger-on and former policeman, John H. "Constitution" O'Brien, was based on the same "research" materials. (It was O'Brien who first hatched the bright idea and raised the money to finance Hamill's work.) Another, by Clement Wood, was largely a rewrite of the first two. Hamill and O'Brien had a quarrel about the expected profits which ended in court. Each called the other a thief and a forger. But though liars might recant, their lies marched on and on.

The rôle of the Communists in the persecution should not be underestimated. They had been past masters in the science of character assassination when men like Michelson and Hamill were still apprentices. Anyone who has been made the target

of organized Communist slander can testify to its terrifying effectiveness. From 1930 forward Hoover became, and remains to this day, the head devil in American Communist demonology. The whole totalitarian left, including its periphery of muddled "liberals," has concentrated its choicest epithets on the ex-President.

Happily there has been in the last few years an unmistakable reversal of public sentiment on Hoover. Except at the lunatic Left, Americans now find it possible to disagree with him without impugning his motives or smearing his character. There is reason to believe, indeed, that millions of Americans have a guilty conscience about the treatment of their only living ex-President; a belated sense of the heavy cross he has borne in long-suffering silence.

## THE GRASS STILL GROWS

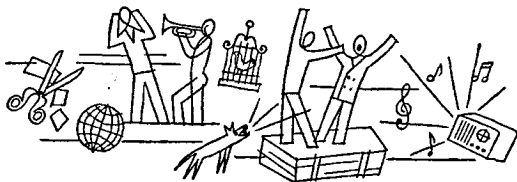
BY KAYE STARBIRD

No book can tell you how to come of age,  
No doctor hand you courage in a cup;  
Maturity is no man's heritage.  
There is no easy way of growing up.  
Yet if you watch for wild birds and the spring,  
Seeing each year the first flowers come to birth,  
You will need fewer hours for wondering  
And live among the answers of the earth.  
And you will ask small knowledge, having faith  
In rain and sun enough to last the season,  
Accepting equally the life and death  
Of the least leaf, unmindful of the reason.  
There is not much to learn if you can know  
The same field white through clover and through snow.

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## THE SOAP BOX

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### EDITORIAL NOTES

*Shop Talk.* Editors, like clergymen, doctors, barbers and bartenders are sometimes called upon to perform strange services. The staff historian recalls that years ago a MERCURY editor was asked by a very personable young woman to help her in her battle to win the affections of a male contributor whose work had aroused her great admiration. The editor agreed with her regarding the high competence of the contributor, but he pointed out to her that the best service he could render her would be to wish her well in her efforts. . . . Lately we have been getting verses from the former governor of a sovereign state, and also from a member of a high court of another equally sovereign state. Unfortunately, we have not been able to use any of their work, though we hope that in the near future they will send verses that will fit into our pages. We also hope that other public officials, not only in the states but also in the Federal government, will honor us with their contributions, in verse, fiction or article

form. American officialdom, unlike its counterpart in England and in France, has been, to a considerable extent, somewhat immature in its attitude toward literary composition. It would be a pleasure and an honor for THE AMERICAN MERCURY to serve as a medium heralding a change in the attitude of our public officials towards the art of writing. . . . More than two years ago we ran an article politely questioning some of the claims made by astrologists, and quoting a few of their more bizarre pronouncements. Immediately we were swamped with vigorous protests by practicing astrologists, who claimed that their calling was based on sound scientific principles. This was to be expected, but what surprised us was the protest mail we got from professors in some Middle Western colleges, from historians of some eminence, and, alas, from some editors too. Only recently one editor associated with an eminent publishing establishment argued that there was a difference between "fake" astrology and "scientific" astrology, and he urged us to study the subject further. Politely, we promised we

would. We are living in very strange times, indeed. . . . The urge to write must be very powerful. A would-be contributor reminded us a while ago that, to date, she has sent us 143 manuscripts of every description — verse, fiction, articles — and that we have not accepted one. She added, sadly, that she has had no better luck with twenty other magazines. We had told her repeatedly that her material was not suited for our pages, but she persists in thinking otherwise. When does an aspiring writer realize that the good Lord intended him or her for some other occupation? After years of slavery at the editorial desk, we are obliged to admit that we don't know. Those bitten with the literary bug have one thing in common with those bitten with the Presidential bug: they almost never get over it.

We have often been asked why we don't print financial articles more often. The answer is simply that getting good ones is one of the most difficult aspects of magazine editing. Many financial writers employ a jargon that barely makes sense to intelligent lay readers, and they assume a knowledge of economic and financial history and even contemporary facts that is far less common than they imagine. We on the *MERCURY* were fortunate recently in getting into our pages (January 1948) the excellent article, "The Financial Plight of Our Cities," by Sam Shulsky, a sound reporter and good writer. We hope to

print more articles on finance and economics by Mr. Shulsky in the near future. But we would also like to hear from other writers who are familiar with the facts — and legends, too — of the world of finance. Subjects? How about a general article on the financial press? Or a documented article on the record of the experts of Wall Street and State Street? Or a simple expository piece on the good and evil of the Stock Exchange? Or an analysis of government and private credit in terms understandable to all? Or an article on the whole subject of the gold standard?

A correspondent complains that in our recent call for profiles of the states and territories we did not mention the Canal Zone. The complaint is well founded, and our only plea in abatement is that the omission was an oversight. No slur of any kind was intended at the good men and women who inhabit that worthy and flourishing community that is one of the bastions of American democracy. (Canal Zone papers may copy this without written permission from the editors.) All those, natives or residents, male or female, who wish to do right by the Zone are cordially invited to send in their manuscripts.

The halls of Congress, and of several of the state legislatures, have lately resounded with the pleas of medical scientists, agriculturists and nutrition-



ists to abolish the tax on margarine, because it is a perfectly sound food, at certain times of the year even more beneficial to health than butter. The debate may have been news to most readers of the daily and periodical press, but it was not news to readers of *THE AMERICAN MERCURY*, who had read all about the issues involved in the article, "Butter Vs. Margarine," by Hubert A. Kenny, in the August 1947 issue. We congratulate Mr. Kenny upon a very able article that scooped the daily newspapers by some nine months.

## RAYMOND WEAVER

I never met him. I didn't know him. But when I read about his death I was startled . . . and I began to think. Here was easily the most original professor of English that Columbia University has had in some 40 years. Almost single-handed he achieved what was virtually a miracle: he dragged from oblivion the greatest novelist this country has produced, and gave him his proper place in American literature. What Professor Weaver did to Herman Melville, and especially to his monumental *Moby Dick*, was a form of literary resurrection that put the whole nation in his debt. But what gratitude did the nation display? What gratitude did Columbia University display? Professor Weaver was never, to the best of my knowledge, listed in *Who's Who*. He was not made a full professor by Columbia till last year, a few months before his

death at the age of 59, and 26 years after his work on Melville. Second-rate minds "borrowed" much of his material for gooey works on Melville and made money and achieved what passes for literary fame in New York. Not a single paper mourned his death. . . . Well, maybe it's just as well. Professor Weaver probably would have liked it that way. His hero, Herman Melville, didn't fare any better in his lifetime, and for decades after his death.

DOUGLAS B. SEYMOUR

*Boston, Mass.*

## BABBITTS OF THE LEFT

All genuine liberals owe thanks to Arthur Koestler for having created the term, "Babbitts of the Left," on his recent trip to this country. What a picturesque and accurate phrase! How beautifully it describes so many of our deluded intellectuals! Max Lerner, Saul Padover, I. F. Stone, Freda Kirchwey, Joseph Barnes — what else are they but Babbitts of the Left?

Consider how much in common they have with George F. Babbitt. Like him, they seem to be proud of their lack of knowledge, and like him they seem to suspect all information and all ideas that conflict with their small fund of facts and ideas. Like him, too, they seem to fall naturally into the smear technique. George F. used to call those who disagreed with his economic views Socialists or Bol-

sheviks; his spiritual brothers on the left call their opponents fascists, red-baiters and so on. George F. went about town with a holier-than-thou attitude. Does any one look more sanctified on the street or on the platform than, say, Max Lerner? . . . But wait, there is probably one difference between George F. and the Lerner. George did have some intellectual tolerance; deep down in his soul he knew that there was something not altogether despicable in Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom, and that maybe Eugene V. Debs was not entirely off his head. Yes, George F. searched his soul in the still small watches of the night. But I wonder how much soul-searching goes on among the Babbitts of the Left. Very little, I should say.

NANETTE O'DONNELL

*Queens, L. I., N. Y.*

## A NOTE ON ACADEMIC HACKS

I am getting sick and tired of hearing and reading denunciations of journalistic hacks, especially when they come from professors. I am not defending or denouncing journalistic hacking. It's no better and no more despicable a way of earning a living than, say, running a haberdashery store, or writing editorials for the Hearst papers, or turning out best-selling pot boilers as, say, Thomas Costain or Pearl Buck are doing. It's a dreadfully tough world, gentle readers, and I'm not judging anyone.

But neither should professors judge. They least of all. There are plenty of hacks among them. There is a professor at Columbia who writes on poetry, economics, history, fiction and philosophy for almost any magazine that will ask him. There is another professor at Columbia who has written the same history text-book several times — and, I imagine, done handsomely by all of them. There is still another professor at the same institution of higher learning, as the gag goes, who writes on drama, philology, music, poetry and fishing — for pay, of course.

This last party is a close runner-up to a professor at Harvard who lately has been filling the so-called high-tone periodicals with pieces on about a dozen varying subjects — and, since I know a bit about one of them, I should say he gathers his facts from secondary sources, to put it charitably. Then there is a professor who teaches a very abstruse subject in a Western university, who recently disgraced himself and a certain periodical by praising a shabby novel to the skies.

But there's no point in going on. I'm not blaming these academicians. Most of them are dreadfully underpaid, and they can use extra money. But, out of decency, they shouldn't sneer at journalistic hacks. Hacking, my friends, is hacking, and distinguishing between one kind and another is pure astrology.

NEW YORK *Times* REPORTER

*New York City*

# THE LYNCHING OF THE McDONALD BOYS

BY RICHARD M. DORSON

Few legends spawned in American history can match the story of the lynching of the McDonald boys at Menominee, Michigan, in 1881. It involves a brutal bloodletting orgy and a bizarre superstition.

Not many Americans know our history legends. The Germans, who call them *Sagen*, and other European peoples have long specialized in such tales, but in this country the historian has shied away from myth, and the folklorist has bypassed history, so that the *Sagen* have lain in a no-man's land. Yet all through the United States the people retell stories of spectacular local events, that bloom into legend with the years.

In Menominee, a sawmill town on Lake Michigan's Green Bay, just above the Wisconsin line, oldtimers have spun the grisly yarn of the McDonald lynching to pop-eyed youngsters for more than sixty years. Echoes of the tale float around Michigan and her neighbor states, and can be heard in saloons and boardinghouses when lumberjacks and lakesmen talk about knife-killings and witch-healings. No

two granddads tell quite the same story, for this is strictly a family tradition, never frozen in print, and distorted with all the vagaries that grow from hearsay and surmise. But on one point, the very heart of the legend, all the storytellers agree: that every ringleader in the lynching died with his boots on.

On the afternoon of September 26, 1881, the two McDonald boys stabbed to death a half-breed named Billy Kittson. Billy belonged to a family that had been burned out in the disastrous Peshtigo fire of 1871, moved to infant Menominee, and seen it mushroom into a bawdy lumber town. He had an English father, an older brother Norman who later became janitor for a church, and a husky two-hundred-pound half-brother named George, who started the McDonald-Kittson feud by arresting the McDonalds at Quinnesec while serving as a deputy sheriff.

Everyone called them the McDonalds, although they were actually cousins, and the tall slim one was

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named McDougall. One tradition describes them as "very fine fellows, except when they were drunk, when they were always fighting with knives." During the spring drive on the Pine River they got into trouble, and assaulted the Menominee sheriff, a man named Ruprecht who had a glass eye. Ruprecht then deputized big George Kittson to arrest them.

After their release from jail, the McDonalds worked two days for the Bay Shore Lumber Company, in Menominee. They then relaxed at a saloon, the Montreal House, in a section of the west end known as Frenchtown. One of the boys swore to Norm Kittson, who was tending bar, that he would "get" his brother George, and pulled out a spring jackknife significantly. Leaving the saloon, the McDonalds drifted up to the Frenchtown whorehouse. A trail ran off Bellevue Street, on which only two houses then stood, through a tangle of jack pine to the whorehouse.

Billy Kittson was in there, drinking whisky with the whores out of quart-size pop bottles. The men fell to quarreling, and Billy hit the little McDonald over the head with a bottle. Then he walked out into the street, toward the Montreal House.

Norm Kittson and three or four others were standing on the corner by the saloon. They saw the McDonalds coming behind Billy, and Norm shouted out, "Hurry up, Billy, they're after you."

"I'm not afraid of the sons of bitches," answered Billy.

The McDonalds closed in. "Don't do nothing, boys," pleaded Norman. Big Mac knocked Billy down on his hands and knees with a peavy club. Then he drove the blade of a six inch dirk into his backbone.

Norman went to help Billy and little Mac stabbed him in the neck. Billy, staggering, went to help Norm in turn and got stabbed again, in the head. Norman, who had been knocked down, almost fainted, but managed to roll over and pull a .32-caliber revolver out of his pocket. He fired twice and hit little Mac in the calf of his leg.

Billy was so drunk he did not know he had been hurt. He walked a block to the Montreal House, and blithely ordered drinks for the crowd. One hanger-on, seeing that Norman was being attended to, said, "You better look after Billy first." A blanket was laid down by the stove for Billy, but he walked to the window first, suddenly shot his hands up over his head, and dropped dead.

After the stabbing the McDonalds ran back for a rig, and then drove to Dr. Phillips, in Finntown near the depot. They were caught there and put in jail.

## II

At the Forvilly House on Ludington Street, the largest hotel in town, men gathered, drank steadily and talked ominously all the next day. Hearings had been postponed while the prosecutor rounded up witnesses, and the lumber bosses chafed at the delay.

Max Forvilly was in the group, supplying the liquor, and Bob Stephenson, superintendent of the Ludington, Wells & Van Schaick Lumber Company; Robert Barclay, the sheriff, who ran a livery stable; Louis Portvin (usually called Porter) and Tom Parent, boom bosses; and Frank Saucier, a drayman. Someone spoke of a lynching. These McDonalds were troublemakers: hadn't they beat up a sheriff? — and here again two days after release from jail they had murdered a man, a son of the second oldest settler in town. How could the companies operate with confidence when such desperadoes roamed the streets? Teach them necktie justice! (The lynchers did not reason that the lumber companies had blocked all the bridges, so that escape was unlikely, and that the evidence against the McDonalds seemed irrefutable.)

Bob Stephenson said he would furnish the rope. Frank Saucier offered to supply a big square timber to force entry into the jail. In his dray cart, with which he peddled water at ten cents a barrel, he had just hauled some timbers to a space directly behind the courthouse. Early in the evening the group of determined men marched on the courthouse, lugging a large timber. Two deputy sheriffs guarded the jail. One, Jack Fryer, said he would shoot the first man who approached. But Louis Porter grabbed the gun out of his hand and threw it on the grass, saying, "You can't kill all of us." The gang crowded into the courthouse with their timber.

They battered down one cell door and found it empty. They tried a second. The taller McDonald stood there. "Boys, give me five minutes to talk," he begged.

"Dog, we wouldn't give you one minute," the answer came back.

A rope was thrown over his head. Louis Porter walked up to the smaller McDonald and started to put a noose around his neck too. This McDonald had a penknife, with a blade an inch-and-a-half long, which one of the whores had given him. He stuck it through Porter's hand. Porter turned to Laramie, a redheaded Frenchman standing by, and said, "Give me that ax." He smacked the smaller McDonald with it and killed him on the spot. The two men were dragged out of the courthouse basement and thrown over the iron gate. The taller McDonald's neck caught on an iron post, and stretched a foot.

Some of the lynch party grabbed the noose ends and hauled the pair by their necks down Main Street. The others jumped up and down gleefully on the moving bodies, gouging out chunks of flesh with their heavy caulked boots. They scrapped and swore for standing room and a free ride on the McDonalds' legs, groins, stomachs and chests. Max Forvilly rode most comfortably of all by sitting down and straddling a corpse.

A crowd speedily formed beyond the Fire Department, whooping and hollering at the fun. The streets in no time became alive with shrieking women and drunken lumberjacks,

and shrill with the tooting of whistles and the clang of church bells. Mothers held their babes in the air to goggle at the parade. For frontier Menominee, this beat any camp meeting revival or Fourth of July jamboree.

The lynchers stopped at a railroad crossing sign that said "Look Out for the Cars," and strung up their prey. The taller McDonald twitched as he was being raised, and a woman shouted ecstatically, "Good! You didn't struggle like that little girl!" (It was believed he had raped a young virgin.) The crowd threw stones and refuse and spat curses at the dangling McDonalds.

But Sam Pelthier, who kept a lumberman's home, argued with the leaders. He said the fluttering corpses would scare the horses, and the women and children, and cause accidents at the crossing. The leaders, men of business, saw the weight of the argument. Now a really ghoulish idea attracted them. They pulled down the bodies and dragged them back to the starting point of the crime, the whorehouse on Bellevue Street. They dumped the corpses on a bed and forced the girls — some twelve or fourteen of them — to lie with their earlier customers. Some say the fight had originally begun when one McDonald 'accused Kittson of chiseling on his girl. If so, the two-timing gal now had a chance to prove she still loved her man. Next the gang whipped the whores out of the house, and burned it. Then they strung the McDonalds to two little jack pine trees outside.

A photograph exists, that shows the McDonalds hung to the jack pines. I have spoken to an oldtimer named George Premo, who has seen the picture. He is a tough man, but he says that the picture is more than the human stomach can stand.

### III

No trial was ever held, no arrests were even made, of the ringleaders. But it would not be correct to say that they never received justice. Sentence had been passed even before they reached the crossing sign with the dying men. Father Menard, whose church stood only a block away from the courthouse, pleaded with the gang to desist, as they careened down Main Street. When the bloodied men laughed in his face, he denounced them with this curse: that all who rode the bodies would die with their boots on. So say the French and Irish Catholics. Men of other faiths feel that divine vengeance visited the curse on the lynchers.

In the ballad that the folk made and sang on the event, the McDonalds become wronged, misguided youths, who pay with their lives for their innocent fun, and the men who resorted to lynch law are the transgressors:

To make a declaration

As best we think we can,  
You know liquor had the best of us

As it has of many a man;  
And if we acted in our own defense

Let Mercy lend a hand,  
And if we're guilty of the crime  
The law can us command.

But the law is not permitted to  
take its course:

The jail is broke, the mob is in;  
Give us one word to say,  
Take a message to our mothers  
Who live in Canaday.  
It will make them brokenhearted  
And cause them grief and pain  
To think they never more shall see  
Their own dear sons again.

In the years since the lynching, a sequel has been added, which many folks solemnly repeat. The curse has been fulfilled, and all the leaders have died strange and violent deaths.

Bob Stephenson, who furnished the rope, died first, within a year after the lynching. A fire started in his lumber yard, among piles of four-foot slabs, then used to fuel the lakes boats. The space of a wagon road separated the two flaming piles, each several hundred feet long. Stephenson wanted his men to go between the piles and tip them over, to save the slabs. Neither they nor Randall, the fire chief, would enter the inferno.

"By God, haven't you got guts enough?" asked Stephenson.

He walked in between the piles with a hose. Flame swept across his face. He opened his mouth and gasped for air. Stephenson was full of whiskey. He inhaled some flame and his alcoholic breath caught fire. He ignited, like a human blowtorch. "Boys, I'm done for," he sobbed.

He lingered three days and died in slow misery. He was given a fine Masonic funeral.

Louis Porter was going out with

his crew to Paint Dam in the spring, to drive logs on the river. He said, "Go on ahead, boys, I'm tired. I'll be out dere in a liddle while." The crew never bothered about him, because he had not been sick, but he did not show up all day. When the mule drivers came back that night, after unloading, the mules stopped at the hill where Porter had sat down to rest and refused to go further. The teamsters found him still sitting there, his back against a tree, his arms folded, his legs crossed around a cane, his head resting on his arms. But now he was dead. Some say a venomous water snake bit him in the foot. Porter's name is marked on that birch tree today, two and a half miles outside the wilderness village of Amasa.

Dunn was adjusting a head saw in a sawmill in Green Bay, Wisconsin. He thought the carriage was locked. Maybe the catch was not fastened, or maybe a setter touched the lever. The saw swung back and he went through it, sliced like a pickle.

Frank Saucier died on a train going from Iron River to Menominee, while on a carpenter job. He dropped dead without apparent cause.

Albert Lemieux, a timber cruiser, was playing cards in camp with Dune Cruikshank, when he suddenly got up, took a knife, and slashed his neck.

Alfred Beach, whom they called Long Beach because he was so very tall, tipped over in a boat and drowned.

Some men boasted they would never die with their boots on. One



was George Chandler, a boomer. He was in all kinds of accidents and sicknesses, but pulled through after being in bed for about three years. His first day up he took a little walk, and just as he got back to the gate of his house, he toppled over and died.

Barclay, the ex-sheriff, was another who swore he would cheat the curse. One day he drove a team of horses in a surrey from his livery stable to a family reunion. He tied up the

horses, walked to the front gate, waved cheerily to the group, and slumped down dead.

Max Forvilly, whose whisky primed the necktie party, lost his hotel and everything he had, went crazy, and died on a little farm.

No other prisoner has ever occupied the cell that held the McDonalds. When the WPA rebuilt the courthouse, the bloodstains were still to be seen on the wall.

## PREACHER

BY CHARLES ANGOFF

For fifty-three years  
He thundered hell and damnation  
For sinners, transgressors,  
Atheists, gamblers, and drunkards.

Of love he made a duty,  
Of children an obligation;  
And every domestic joy  
And public jubilation  
Was according to  
Evangelical regulation.

At seventy-six he died,  
Fittingly mourned,  
But at the ordained time  
He awoke in hell.

Lucifer explained:  
"Here come all preachers  
Who violate God's commandments:  
To judge sparingly  
And proclaim the happy life,  
Glorious and untrammelled.  
Despair is heresy."

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Q. Do you know what not to do?

A. Don't try to *be* the doctor! Do whatever is necessary to save the victim's life, and to prevent shock by keeping him warm and quiet, *but no more*. Don't move the patient unless it is absolutely necessary. Don't give unconscious persons water or liquids. Remember, doing the wrong thing may be worse than doing nothing, and a good rule to follow is "If in doubt — DON'T."





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**TO VETERANS—IF YOU HAVE NATIONAL SERVICE LIFE INSURANCE—KEEP IT!**

# ELLIE NEWCOMB

A STORY

BY CAROL KEMERER EDWARDS

AS ANN STOWELL paused by the front bench in the waiting room of the Baby Clinic to loosen the band of her volunteer's coif, Mrs. Sukey Ross inquired politely: "How's yo' health this mornin', Miss Ann?" She was sitting on the end nearest the door and fanning Delphine and herself with *Tuberculosis Can Be Cured*.

"Hot," said Ann. She glanced towards the charge desk where Miss Trigg, crisp and starched, sorted charts. She lowered her voice. "I didn't know it could be so hot in the Blue Ridge."

"Well, it don't keep folks away," commented Mrs. Pinkie James. She shifted Billy to her other knee and indicated the full benches behind her with a backward jerk of the head.

"An' more a-comin'." There was something portentous in the slow way Mrs. Ross spoke the words.

Mrs. Hanks and Mrs. James drew nearer. It cost them both considerable effort, what with Mrs. James being that way again, and Mrs. Hanks' maneuverability hampered by her great bulk, but when Sukey talked that-a-way. . . .

"Who you referrin' to, Sukey?" panted Mrs. Hanks.

"Someone comin' first time, meb-be?" Mrs. James' voice sharpened with interest.

"Jes' listen to 'em, Miss Ann." Mrs. Ross tossed her head. She had a nice story and was not to be prodded. "Mist' Shackleford give me a lift down Turkey Foot this mornin'. Delphine and me set in the front seat 'longside him, and nigh had our breath blew right out of us, we humped along so fast. Felt right cool. When we got down where Fiddler's Lane meets Turkey Foot . . . you all recollect where 'tis. . . ."

Mrs. Hanks nodded. Something more than perspiration glistened on her face. "Sure, Sukey; go on."

"Well, standin' there, big as life and twice as natural . . . mebbe you can guess, me givin' you the location like that . . ."

"Not her again!" Mrs. James almost let Billy roll off her knees. "Not Ellie Newcomb!"

"Had she cause to come to the Clintic?" asked Mrs. Hanks.

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CAROL KEMERER EDWARDS is a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis. This short story is her first published work of fiction.

Mrs. Ross nodded, well pleased with herself. "If you call a wropped up bundle cause. And she was jes' swingin' along, bold as a jay bird, holdin' that Wardie of hers by the hand, talkin' and laughin' like all get out with him, and huggin' a least 'un in her arm."

"Why didn't Mr. Shackleford pick her up, too?" asked Ann.

The women looked at one another. Mrs. Hanks shook her head, and Mrs. James drew in a quick breath. There was a moment of silence, then Mrs. Ross said, "Pick up Ellie Newcomb!" Her voice rose into a little shriek. Instantly there was a sharp rap rap as Miss Trigg knocked on her desk with a ruler.

"Will you people be quiet!"

It was a command when Miss Trigg said it, not a question. Even the babies seemed to understand and ceased their fretful wailing for a moment. The hum of conversation stopped. Miss Trigg went on: "How many times do I have to remind you of the simple rules Mr. Thornberry expects you to follow? Silence shall be maintained at all times. That's what he says. It's right here in the Rules Book, and it's ungrateful, to put it mildly, to have you disregard Mr. Thornberry's wishes when he has done so much for you."

Ann picked up an empty jug she had rested on the bench. "Looks like it's time for me to get going," she whispered. "I'll be seeing you."

She took the jug into the V. D. utility room where Miss Rhodes was

painting on a very charming mouth. "Hello, honey. Hot, isn't it? Pretty near hot as the summer I spent up nawth in your town."

Ann agreed. "Yes, Philadelphia can be pretty awful." She put the long end of a rubber hose in her jug and let water trickle into it from the distilling machine.

Miss Rhodes flounced out a blue and yellow print handkerchief and tucked it into her breast pocket. It shone against the starched white of her uniform like some exotic flower. She pinned the V of her neck a bit lower and smiled at Ann's reflection in the mirror.

"It's young Doc's day in V.D., honey. He's got to begin noticing me pretty soon, 'cause I'm going to marry that boy, you know."

"No, I didn't know it, Miss Rhodes."

Miss Rhodes laughed comfortably. "Well, as a matter of fact, he don't know it yet either. But it'll come. Any time now. I like him a lot, and I'll make a good wife for a doctor. When you're pushing 34 like me, you got to act quick, honey, or you'll be left an old maid like Trigg in there." She nodded towards the Baby Clinic across the hall. "Left making a fool of yourself over a married man."

"Miss Trigg!" Ann was so startled that she forgot to watch the jug. "Why Miss Trigg hates men! You should hear the way she talks to any of the fathers who happen to stray into the Clinic. And the way she treats nice Doctor Ainslie. . . . Why

Miss Trigg couldn't be in love. She's too . . . too tight."

Miss Rhodes crooked the tube Ann had forgot and put it back into the big tank. The jug was full. "Say, you're not dry behind the ears yet, honey, or you'd be noticing. When you're Trigg's age and gone on a man, like she is on Thornberry, it's downright dangerous. Never know what a woman like that'll do."

"Not Mr. Thornberry!"

"Sure."

"But . . ."

Miss Rhodes fluffed out her bang with a pocket comb and stood back from the mirror to see the effect. "Listen, dearie, you better not stand there gassing. You better get started or Trigg'll find one of her precious rules to holler at you. She gets some kind of kick out of just saying his name. It's Thornberry, Thornberry, Thornberry all the time. 'Mr. Thornberry says so. It's Rule 999.'"

Miss Rhodes imitated Miss Trigg's peremptory tones so perfectly that Ann giggled.

"And when you come right down to it," Miss Rhodes went on, "Thornberry never said a thing. I saw Trigg myself writing out those damn rules. Gives her a thrill just to say his name, that's all. Nuts!"

"I can't believe it, Miss Rhodes . . ."

Miss Rhodes handed Ann the full jug and gave her a little push out of the room. "It's nine, honey. And don't go bothering your head. Nothing'll happen. Thornberry's got his

eye on cuter gits. You just marry that nice college boy you got the picture of, and don't be too long about it. It don't pay to stifle natural feelings . . . and listen, wish me luck."

Ann looked questioning.

"About young Doc, you know."

"Oh, yes. Yes, of course. I do wish you luck. And *he'll* be lucky, Miss Rhodes." Ann spoke warmly. Miss Rhodes was a good sort under that rather common exterior. Ann liked her.

## II

She carried the heavy jug into the service room of the Baby Clinic and poured the water into the sterilizer. It was hot, but a small breeze came in through the open window. Ann stood in the welcome draught and looked down the road that ran past the Clinic and up Turkey Foot. It was empty. Dust that had been churned into clouds by patients half an hour before now lay in gray ridges. How powdery it was! No wonder children loved running barefoot in it, feeling the softness squeeze through their toes. Turkey Foot. What an odd name! Miss Rhodes said it was the poorest of the trails. It was rocky and no good for farming. And lonesome. Few people lived up that way. In the fall, men went there to hunt wild turkey. That was about all.

A figure was coming around the bend in the road, walking slowly. As Ann accommodated her eyes to the distance, she saw a bundle in the woman's arms, and by her skirts a

small boy. It was an ordinary sight in these parts. But as the group drew nearer, it wasn't ordinary. For there was a rare protecting tenderness in the woman's gesture as she moved the blanket to shade the face of the baby in her arms and as she matched her gait to that of the older child whose hand she held.

Ann heard the sterilizer whistling. There was a full twenty minutes of work, but still she lingered by the window. Something about the approaching group compelled her, though she could not name it. She could see the woman's face plainly now. She wasn't a woman. She was a girl, probably not as old as Ann herself, and very lovely. But beauty was not extraordinary in mountain girls. The child was like her. His face was rounder but he had the same regular features, the same wavy fair hair. He did not skip ahead and make little scurries into the roadside as most children do. He stayed close and seemed as much a part of the girl as the swaddled baby on her arm.

Ann drew a quick breath. She knew now what attracted her so strongly to the group even across the distance. It was the startling impression of unity they gave, an indivisible oneness, as if they were one, not three, as if a sculptor had chipped at a block of granite and discovered in the heart of it three shapes inextricably bound forever.

Who was this girl? "Comin' down Turkey Foot. . . . Carryin' a wropped up bundle. . . . Holdin' that Wardie

of hers by the hand. . . ." It all fitted. This must be Ellie Newcomb then. But why hadn't they stopped to pick her up? Ann recalled the looks on the faces of Mrs. Pinkie James and Mrs. Ross. It was confusing, but Miss Trigg's voice, distant but distinct, cut in on her thoughts and sent her scurrying about her tasks.

"You'd think this place was a dump pile instead of a clinic," rapped out Miss Trigg, rigid and disapproving behind her desk. "Pick up your belongings and keep them together. What if Mr. Thornberry dropped in right now? How do you think he'd feel if he saw this mess?"

The voice went on. Ann closed the door. Thornberry . . . Thornberry. . . . She sharpened some hypodermic needles on soapstone; a dull needle was a vicious thing to use on a baby. She set up temperature trays and gave the thermometers a precautionary shake. She hurried from the supply room to the doctor's office and performed a half-hundred jobs she usually found dull without thinking about them. Her mind was busy with what Miss Rhodes had told her.

Miss Trigg in love! It was preposterous. The very notion of that spare, beak-nosed creature with her paling hair even dreaming of love. . . . And yet, maybe that explained her silly excitement the morning of the dedication. Odd how one little remark can explain incidents that go unnoticed when they occur.

It had been hot that morning of the dedication, but hardly hot enough



to account for Miss Trigg's alarmingly red face, or the fact that she had to wipe her misted eye glasses constantly. Mr. Thornberry had arrived only a few minutes before the ceremonies. He was a big man. His lips were too red, and his hair was red too, what there was of it. He kept one hand in his pocket jingling coins.

"So this is the new volunteer," he beamed. He looked at Ann as if he could see through the bib of her apron, and seemed to want to go on talking, but Miss Trigg whisked him off. She told Ann it was time to take her seat.

### III

Ann sat next to Miss Rhodes in the back row on the platform, and Miss Trigg, Doctor Ainslie, Mr. Thornberry and Reverend Hicks sat in front. The benches, put up on the lawn for the occasion, were filled with the mountain women and their children. They sat patient, yet eager. They loved a preachin' and this promised to be next best. Men lounged under the trees on the outskirts of the group. They stood with that relaxed and silent ease which distinguishes the mountaineer. Now and then a miner passed with a lamp still on his cap. But he did not stop. This was mountain day.

At a signal from Miss Trigg, Reverend Hicks stood up.

"We thank Thee, O, Lord," he trumpeted. Then he proceeded to enumerate long lists of blessings for full fifteen minutes. Miss Trigg nearly jerked out of her seat from nervous-

ness when Mr. Thornberry's name was mentioned. The Almighty was thanked for "presarvin' this man of good works on his parlous air journey from N'York." Lest there be some mistake about who this man was, he was duly named. "I refer to Thaddeus Thornberry, Lord, and may he be helt by the Everlasting Wings when he returns tonight."

There were rapturous Amens from the audience. Miss Trigg's knuckles showed white as she clasped them hard together on her starched lap. Then Doctor Ainslie introduced Mr. Thornberry and the real business of the morning began.

Mr. Thornberry had a rich voice. Like Reverend Hicks he drew inspiration from his flattering audience. He rolled out his syllables and told how the health of the miners was close to the heart of the Thornberry Mining and Smelting Corporation, to the extent, indeed, that they had established the best clinic money could provide, in order to look after them all properly.

Ann was not deceived. She'd had a good course in Industrial Relations and had heard of the United Mine Workers, but Miss Trigg evidently gave Mr. Thornberry full credit for this munificence. Her face glowed. Her eyes never left the great shoulders before her.

"Now we go even further," Mr. Thornberry continued. "We believe that the health of the whole community is our concern also. So the Corporation has decided that, not only the miners, but *all* the folks in

harmony . . . those living up Bear Hollow, those back in Lonesome Run, those on Turkey Foot, all of you, in fact, are to share the benefits of this clinic. From now on, one day each week, every facility here will be available to you and to your families. I believe Tuesday's mountain day, is it not, Miss Trigg?"

Amid applause and cries of "Bless you," Mr. Thornberry turned to Miss Trigg. She half rose, and then sat down abruptly. She fingered the enamel graduating pin at her collar and smoothed her skirts. Then she took off her eye-glasses and rubbed at them.

"Such palpitations," whispered Miss Rhodes to Ann.

"Miss Trigg is to have over-all charge on Tuesdays because of her intimate knowledge of you people through her years of service as visiting nurse," Mr. Thornberry went on. "But her special province is to be the babies. . . ."

He paused. He was looking towards the front bench where Millie Tyler was hushening young Tyler in the manner most satisfactory to gentlemen. Her unbuttoned calico waist revealed the source of young Tyler's contentment, white, full, unashamed.

"Boy, if Trigg caught sight of that," whispered Miss Rhodes nodding towards Millie. But Miss Trigg was gazing at Mr. Thornberry. Miss Rhodes went on: "He hasn't any kids of his own, and they do say he has a frozen stick for a wife, so maybe it's no wonder."

"Sh-h." Ann was feeling nervous.

"Ah . . . as I was saying," Mr. Thornberry came back to his notes, "as I was saying, Tuesday's mountain day. Aside from a sense of public duty, I have a sense of gratitude. I feel I owe a great deal to these mountains, and to you who live in them. No one will ever know what it means to me when I come here each November, to hunt the trails for woodcock, partridge, wild turkey. It renews me. It makes a new man of me. . . ."

"I'll say it does," muttered Miss Rhodes, "and there's good cash 'round here in cabins where there are pretty gals come November, too."

Ann flushed. "He wouldn't dare. Not a man in his position."

"Oh, he's discreet, honey. And money's a great silencer. I just have ways of finding out things. Trigg knows too, I bet a cookie, but she won't admit anything she doesn't want to believe." Miss Rhodes' brows drew together.

Half an hour later the ceremonies were over, and Miss Trigg went into active service. She darted to retrieve a handkerchief Mr. Thornberry dropped, propelled him into the dining room, frisked about seeing that his water glass was full, his chop properly done and his biscuits replaced by fresh ones before they had been tasted. When he complained he had no napkin, she playfully forced two upon him, "to make up," she said. Mr. Thornberry looked somewhat bemused, and stuck one napkin in his pocket. He said he might take a little stroll later, up one

of the trails, but Miss Trigg merrily refused to let him even dream of such a thing.

"Dear, dear! It's far too hot. We can't let Mr. Thornberry risk sunstroke, can we, girls?" She appealed to the nurses about the table. "We must take good care of him the little, short time he is with us."

Miss Rhodes made an unbecoming noise, and then sipped water.

#### IV

Ann finished getting ready for the morning session and gave a quick look about to see that everything was perfect. Miss Rhodes had been right. It was all clear now. Miss Trigg was infatuated with Mr. Thornberry. Ann couldn't call it love. Then old Doctor Ainslie came in.

"Good morning, my dear."

Doctor Ainslie was kind and slow. He infuriated Miss Trigg by allowing mothers to talk on unchecked. If the session ran past the hour stated in the Rules Book Doctor Ainslie didn't mind. Miss Trigg finally devised a method to keep him in line. After eleven she allowed no patient to go in regardless of circumstances. Ann helped the doctor on with his gown.

"Thank you, Miss Ann. You may send in the patients now. I'm ready."

Ann went into the waiting room to fetch the first comers. Miss Trigg was in top form, standing behind her desk and emphasizing her remarks with smart taps of the ruler. "It's a small favor Mr. Thornberry asks . . ."

Ann didn't wait to hear. She beck-

oned to the three women on the front bench. She felt rather sick now that she understood. It was suddenly revolting to hear Miss Trigg's tense, unnatural passion expressed in the scolding and upbraiding of other women.

Mrs. Hanks and Mrs. James and Mrs. Ross got up from the bench with their babies and paraphernalia and followed Ann into the dressing room. They held themselves smugly, with that haughty expression first-comers always exhibit, but the moment the door closed upon them they relaxed into happy gossiping.

"What was you tryin' to tell us in the other room Sukey?" asked Mrs. Pinkie James. She dumped Billy in the first cubicle.

"She shet us up with that ruler of her'n," explained Mrs. Hanks to Ann. Mrs. Hanks sat for a moment to catch her breath, deep within the circle of her fat hips. Trickle of perspiration ran down her neck and between the great breasts outlined in calico. Half moons darkened under her arms.

"I drapped by the Comp'ny store with Mist' Shackleford," said Mrs. Ross, "that's what I had in mind to tell you." She stripped Delphine and carried her to the scales. She was a quick, thin woman accustomed to being first in any line. She handed the baby to Ann. "Like I said," she continued, "I was in the store when Mis' Herndon come in. I ast about Ellie, and she said she was fair struck dumb when Wardie come beggin' her to go to his ma, week or so back."

"Whadda ya know," breathed Mrs. Hanks.

"Ellie had took good care not to show herself, and even Mis' Herndon didn't know 'til she got there. It's a girl this time. How much Delphine weight, Miss Ann?"

Ann smiled. "Going up, Mrs. Ross. She's fine. Ready, Mrs. James?"

"You sure get yourself in a family way easy, Pinkie," commented Mrs. Ross as Mrs. James came up with Billy.

"Leastways I ain't got no cause for shame like some I might mention," retorted Mrs. James.

Ann took Billy and added a twenty-pound weight before shifting the indicator. "I think I saw Ellie, on the road," she said. "She's lovely."

"Lovely is as lovely does, Miss Ann," said Mrs. Ross. "We don't have no truck with the likes of her."

Ann was curious but knew she would get nowhere by a direct question. She gave Billy to his mother, and put young Hanks on the scales. Her hand hovered over him protectingly. He waved his arms and legs in the aimless fashion of the very new and bleated to find himself so lonesome and insecure. Ann rested her hand on his soft fat belly to reassure him. She decided to take a shot in the dark about Ellie.

"I bet she's not the first girl in these parts to have a baby without being married. I can't see why you all are so intolerant."

Mrs. Pinkie James sat down with Billy. She smacked him briskly. "You,

Billy, you set still. It's hard 'nuff me holding you at the eighth month and me with no lap left, without you wiggling about." Then she looked at Ann with direct eyes. "We're not jedgin' unbeknownst, Miss Ann. This here Ellie lived right out with a married man, nervery as anything. And sech carryin's on you never heard tell of. Them two chased each other down the trails, laughin' like loons, and she'd let fly her hair and yell, 'Ketch me,' Mis' Herndon told us."

"He ketched her onct too often," observed Mrs. Ross.

"They do say she didn't know Les Todd were a married man," said Mrs. Hanks softly. "And Ellie were a pore orphan from over Cyastlewood way."

"She must a knew something weren't right when Les Todd wouldn't hev no preachin' spoke over 'em. And that summer Reverend Hicks come 'round right frequent," snapped Mrs. Ross.

"They was too happy actin' to be proper married," said Mrs. James, "that's why none of us was surprised when the sheriff come and took him back to his lawful wife."

"I kinda felt sorry for her, so young, and no cash money, and Wardie already under her apron." Mrs. Hanks spoke low. Ann gave her the baby.

"You got no cause feelin' sorry," said Mrs. James. "That kind makes out. And I reckon Les Todd ain't disappeared entirely, jedgin' by what we saw this morning."

Mrs. Hanks gazed dreamily out of

the window. She smiled and for a moment her fat, wet face looked soft and young. "I dunno," she said, "sometimes I hanker after thinkin' about them two, Les and Ellie, the way they was that summer. They made me think of song ballets my granny used to sing, 'bout a lover and his lass. I recollect how they laughed together, and how they looked at each other, and their pretty ways, and love makin' right out. I dunno."

v

The morning was over. Ann surveyed the confusion of the dressing room and waved an arm as if to dissipate the low hanging cloud of stagnant odors that thickened in the noon heat. She felt limp. This was no time for tiredness. So much to do. But first the charts must be pulled against the afternoon session.

She went into the waiting room where the files were. Someone was sitting by Miss Trigg's desk. That was odd at this hour. Ann could not see who it was at first, but as her eyes grew accustomed to the dark, which Miss Trigg insisted brought coolness, she saw the close outlines of Ellie and her children. Wardie stood by her shoulder with one hand half way about her neck. The little baby was in her arms. Ann thought again, How like a piece of statuary!

Ann had forgotten Ellie in the press of the morning, but now it came back, Mrs. Ross' scorn, and Mrs. Hank's dreamy defence. "They make me think of song ballets." Ann could

see why. And Les Todd must have been a handsome, attractive man to have won the love of Ellie.

She drew up a chair and sat down at the files. It was hard to keep her mind on the dull task with Miss Trigg sitting not ten feet away, rapping out questions to Ellie. Ellie's replies were low, but distinct. Ann kept looking up from the cards.

"I'm sure I don't know why I even bother to see you again, Ellie Newcomb," said Miss Triggs. "After all I did for you with the first one, or tried to, and now this. . . ." She pointed to the baby.

"Mis' Herndon told me 'bout the Clintic. She don't seem right, this least 'un. She were drindlin' from the start, so I brung her to the doctor; ma'm."

"I should think Les Todd had got you into enough trouble without sneaking back and starting all over again."

"Les never come back, Ma'm."

The words were almost too low to catch. Miss Trigg repeated them as if to make sure of their accuracy. "Les never came back! Well, then, Ellie, what's the meaning of this child? You aren't married, I suppose?"

"No, ma'm."

"No, ma'm! Is that an answer? What do you want now?"

"It's only 'cause Dimity's so puny, ma'm. I wouldn't ask your help nowise except for that."

"My help?"

Miss Trigg seemed incapable of doing anything but repeating Ellie's

phrases after her. "My help is nothing but Mr. Thornberry's now. This whole clinic is his . . . his generosity. Have you the nerve now, behaving as you have, to expect help?"

"There weren't any other way for me to behave, ma'm. We had no money, Wardie and I. Les sent what he could 'til *she* ketched him. Then we didn't have anything."

"That's an asinine argument if ever I heard one. And there was another way. I told you when Wardie came. I had it all arranged at the orphanage, and a place for you to work, and you refused to accept my plans. Point blank. Maybe you didn't want to live a decent life. I'm beginning to see, now."

"I couldn't have furriners look after my youngin, ma'm. That's what I told you."

"And you consider yourself a fit mother, I suppose?"

"I love 'em."

Miss Trigg shook her head impatiently. "And so to support Wardie, you got yourself another. That certainly makes sense."

"I didn't plan on Dimity, ma'm. She just happened."

"Nonsense. Babies don't just happen. Next thing you will tell me you found her under a dock leaf, and expect me to believe it."

Ellie bent her head low. "He told me I had no cause to fret."

"That's what men always say." Miss Trigg spoke with clipped asperity. "But I notice babies keep pouring in. And more to come. Men

don't care, they don't. Mighty few think of anyone but themselves. That's why a man like Mr. Thornberry stands out."

Ellie said nothing.

Miss Trigg peered at her closely. "Well, you see now you do have cause to fret, I suppose. But maybe not. Every time you need a dollar, you'll get yourself in a fix and then come crying to me."

"There won't be no more, Miss Trigg." Ellie spoke firmly. "I got money to last now. He give me plenty. And I got it put away safe. It'll keep us 'til Wardie's bigger. He's gettin' right peert, Wardie is." She smiled at the child by her side. "Pretty soon he'll be hoein' the patch and lookin' after Dimity and me like a man."

"Plenty of money? What on earth do you mean?"

But Ellie was not to be interrupted just yet. "No one's going to pester me agin, ma'm. Les give me a gun, and I won't be shy about usin' it, if need comes. Kin we see the doctor now?"

Miss Trigg ignored the question. Her eyes narrowed. "Who gave you all that money, Ellie? There's no one in these parts who has money. Not enough to last you a month, let alone several years, no matter how carefully you managed. Who is the father of this child, Ellie. Who is he?"

Ellie shook her head.

Miss Trigg counted on nine fingers. "Where were you in November, Ellie?"

"In my cabin, in Turkey Foot."

"H'm." Miss Trigg leaned over the desk and looked hard at the child on Ellie's knees. "H'm. It's lonely down Turkey Foot. I remember your cabin. . . ." Miss Trigg spoke slowly, as if she were thinking out loud. "No one is near, except the Herndons, and they must be half a mile away. No one passes there in November, except hunters. Yes," she paused, "you could do a good business down Turkey Foot in November, flaunting yourself, snaring innocent men who might see smoke from your chimney and stop by to rest. You could make money in hunting season. Plenty."

"That's not how it was, ma'm. There was only one. He . . . he give me all the money. It was needful, that's all." Ellie's voice was muffled. She held Dimity close to her face as if to hide herself.

Miss Trigg clutched her ruler with fingers that went white. She looked at the baby again, lying now on Ellie's lap. It lay supine, pale beneath the bright fuzz of reddish hair.

"There's only one man around here in November that has money, Ellie. Do you dare name him?"

Miss Trigg and Ellie looked at each other for a long minute. Miss Trigg's face was drained of color. It had grown small. The hand that held the ruler trembled. She jerked herself to her feet and the chair crashed to the floor behind her, but she did not notice.

"If you are trying to make me believe it is Mr. . . . Mr. . . . Th—" But she couldn't say the name. "You don't answer. You are trying by your

silence to condemn a good man. If it is true, Ellie Newcomb, you are a wicked woman to tempt a fine man, take advantage of his generous nature, snare him with your wiles. . . ."

"Miss Trigg, he had what he wanted. It's over now. Look at Dimity. She's all mine, mine to love and care for. Mr. Thornberry will never know about her. He's nothing to me, an' never was. Nor will be." The baby stirred, whimpering. "She's puny, Dimity is. Kin I see the doctor now, ma'm?"

Miss Trigg turned abruptly and left the room.

## VI

There was quiet. Little separate sounds stood out . . . the ticking of the clock, the flap-flap of the window shade, the rhythmic creak of the chair, as Ellie rocked back and forth with Dimity in her arms. Ann made no further pretence of looking at the files. She sat back in her chair, stunned. But it was Miss Trigg's anger that stunned her, not Ellie's behavior. . . . There was a familiar starched rustle.

"Hello, honey."

It was Miss Rhodes. She stopped on seeing Ellie. "I thought everyone'd be gone."

"This is Ellie Newcomb, Miss Rhodes." Ann got up and took the nurse over to Ellie. "I wish you would look at the baby. It isn't well."

"I'll say." Miss Rhodes took one of the limp wrists in her experienced fingers. Ann noticed how purplish



he parted lips were, how milk-blue he flesh. A fluttering pulse beat in the little hollow at the base of its neck.

"She's good," said Ellie. "She don't ever cry."

"Well, that's fine." Miss Rhodes aid the small hand down and patted Ellie's shoulder. "That's sure something to be thankful for. You just keep her wrapped up. I'll mosey along, money," she said to Ann.

Miss Rhodes went out into the corridor just as Miss Trigg came in from the other door. She seemed entirely composed. She went to the desk, and picked up the chair, but did not sit down.

"I thought you would be gone," she aid to Ellie.

"But, ma'm. I come to see the doctor."

"He's left. Didn't I tell you? It's too late. We close here at noon promptly."

Ann jumped up from the files. "I'll run after him. He's just gone out, Miss Trigg. I'm sure I can catch him."

Miss Trigg looked as if she were seeing Ann for the first time. "You'll do nothing of the sort, Miss Stowell. You will please go on with the work that has been assigned to you."

At any other time, Ann would have gone meekly back to her files, but she was too upset now to be discreet.

"But the baby's sick, Miss Trigg. Tomorrow may be too late."

"You have become an expert diagnostician, Miss Stowell, in the short five weeks you have been with us, but

perhaps, since this happens to be my responsibility, you'll be good enough to let me make the decisions." She turned to Ellie. "You are to leave here, Ellie. You are to leave immediately. And what's more, you are not to come back. You have forfeited whatever right you may have thought you had to come to this clinic."

"But Miss Trigg," Ann was in too deep to care now what she said, "Ellie does have a right. I heard Mr. Thornberry say so himself. He said everyone from Turkey Foot. I remember particularly, because it was the first time I heard that name and I thought it was funny —"

Miss Trigg's eyes glinted behind her spectacles. Even the wings of her cap seemed to quiver.

"I'll thank you to mind your own business, Miss Stowell. You seem to have forgotten yourself entirely. Perhaps if you recollect the lists we have made out, you will recall that we have full clinics for over a week. We have all we can do. Does that satisfy you, or not? If not, perhaps your usefulness here is over."

Ellie gathered the baby in her arms, wrapped her carefully, and then with Wardie by the hand left the waiting room without a word. Ann went back to the files, but she couldn't see them. She wanted to scream, to tear at that rigid starched creature behind the desk, to trample the Rules Book on the floor. Angry words choked in her throat, but she knew she would probably burst out crying if she spoke. With a little mut-

ter of anger, she pushed back from the charts and rushed out into the corridor. She nearly collided with Miss Rhodes.

"She's terrible. And it's nothing but jealousy."

Miss Rhodes did not have to ask who "she" was, but she did try to say that you couldn't call jealousy *nothing*. It was just about the most powerful thing in the world. But Ann wasn't listening.

"She's . . . she's practically murdered that baby. Ellie's, you know. You saw it. It was awfully sick, wasn't it?"

"Yes. It was sick all right."

"And she wouldn't let Doctor Ainslie see it. I could have got him. I told her so."

"Well, honey, babies like that don't have much chance anyhow, not when they're born with leaky hearts."

"But there was *some* chance. You know it. And it's evil not to do what you can. I've got to go after Ellie. Maybe I can't do anything. But I've got to speak to her. I've just got to."

The sun was blistering, but Ann was not conscious of it as she ran down the dusty road. Ellie was walking slowly and she had not got very far. She stopped when Ann called to her and waited.

"Ellie, I'm Ann Stowell." Ann was panting. She grabbed off her coif with a vicious jerk. "I was in there, in the waiting room, you remember. Miss Trigg was terrible, Ellie."

Ellie smiled a little. "Why Miss Ann. She just ain't had the sweetin'

things in life like me. I had Les, an' then Wardie, and now this least 'un. It scrouges a woman up inside wher she don't have nothin' to love. That's all's the trouble with Miss Trigg, ma'm."

"I wish I could do something — write Mr. Thornberry, or —"

"No." Ellie shook her head. "Thank you kindly, Miss Ann, honey, but we don't need Mr. Thornberry no more. We kin make out."

"But Ellie," Ann felt desperate, "I don't want to frighten you, but I don't think you know how sick Dimity is. What if you lost her, it she —"

"I do know, Miss Ann. Seems like I knew from the start." Ellie spoke evenly, "but I 'llowed I'd try the Clintic anyhow." She paused. She looked off towards the hills and her shoulders sagged as if she were very tired, but her face was serene. "I won't lose Dimity. You don't lose them you love, Miss Ann. Not really."

Ann wanted to cry out, to say something, but it had all been said.

"Tell Miss Nurse, good-bye, Wardie," Ellie smiled at the little boy beside her, "we got to be goin' before the shadders come."

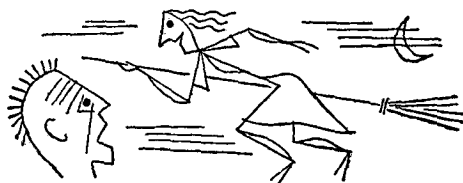
Ellie walked down the road. At the curve she turned to wave her hand. As she stood there with her childrer Ann was seized again by the sense of oneness the group represented. The strong lines of the mother flowed into the slighter ones of her children and formed an enduring unit which nothing could destroy.

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# THE SKEPTICS' CORNER

by BERGEN EVANS

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*That the alligator is a fearsome thing*

Professor Percy A. Morris of the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale in his book *They Hop and Crawl* says: "A person may go swimming in streams inhabited by alligators with perfect safety. So far as the writer has been able to learn, there is no authentic modern record of a wild alligator attacking a man."

*That all peoples at all times have believed in immortality*

The longing for life after death is frequently alleged to be universal and this universality is in its turn sometimes advanced as proof of immortality — just simply that fifty billion humans *can't* be wrong. It is one of the arguments (in *In Memoriam*) with which Tennyson sought to quiet our uneasy grandfathers.

But the belief in immortality is not and has not been universal. Many sects and philosophies of old did not believe in continued, conscious exist-

ence for the individual after death. There is very little support for such a belief in the Old Testament, for example. A few obscure texts have to be strained to give it even a semblance of sanction.

*That parents are responsible for all damage done by their children*

In Louisiana — where, one assumes, the incidence of broken windows is less than elsewhere — they are. In other states it must be shown that the parents were in some way implicated, by encouraging the act or consenting to it. Failure to remonstrate or intervene if they observe the act is commonly regarded as consenting to it.

*That only a policeman can make an arrest*

Any citizen can make an arrest for a felony committed in his presence. He is not generally so empowered, however, in the case of misdemeanors.

Some time ago the *New Yorker* had a satisfying anecdote of a citizen who saw a traffic cop violate a traffic ordinance and compelled him to write himself a ticket. But either the cop was overawed at the magnificence of the act or that particular state had an unusual statute, since the violation of traffic ordinances does not ordinarily constitute a felony.

*That religion is behind the times*

Those who believe that religion should be "sold" to the people like any other commodity and see no reason why vice and greed should monopolize the marketplace and its methods, those who would, as it were, drive the money changers *into* the temple, that they might there exercise their skill in a good cause, will rejoice at a recent advertisement run by the Claretian Fathers in the *Chicago Sun*.

The advertisement counsels the faithful to "Let St. Jude Plead Your Needs" and explains parenthetically that he has the special advantage over other saintly pleaders of being "a relative and intimate friend of Jesus." A dollar secures his services and the sender has his choice of any one of three free gifts—a Holy Medal, Holy Oil or a framed picture. Nine pleas are indicated as the Saint's specialties and readers are urged to mark those petitions which they particularly wish him to take up with his Friend. The practical is stressed. Success in examinations, victory for the school team, the finding of an

apartment and promotion in one's job are among the petitions which may be marked.

*That a landlord cannot enter an apartment or house without the tenant's permission*

Many tenants romantically exalted by the vague idea that "a man's house is his castle" mistake the landing for a portcullis, the elevator shaft for a moat and the landlord for an invading Saracen who may be legitimately repelled and denied admission.

The landlord is legally entitled to enter to ask for the rent, to do anything that has to be done to preserve his property.

*That all animals of a species are equally intelligent*

While we recognize considerable differences in the mental powers of human beings we are prone to assume that all members of an animal species are equally intelligent, all guided by the same "instincts."

Men who have experimented with animals do not share this assumption. All rats are not equally good subjects in a maze. There are wide differences of intelligence among pigeons. Charles Elton (*Animal Ecology and Evolution*, pp. 53-54) presents evidence of different degrees of intelligence among terns and describes one superior pair, the intelligentsia of their island, whose superiority seems to have been acknowledged by their associates.

# THE NEW COMMUNIST INTERNATIONALS

BY MARTIN EBON

THE establishment last September of a Communist Information Bureau, with headquarters in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, was greeted with a vast amount of publicity in the United States. Some of the reactions verged on hysteria. For weeks the press and radio speculated on the precise meaning of the new organization. Was it a revival of the Comintern? Did it presage a series of civil wars in Europe? Would the American Communists join? From all sides, the new Cominform was subjected to relentless critical examination.

In the years since the war ended, four other worldwide organizations, all of them controlled by Communists, have also made an appearance. But these four internationals, which are of crucial importance in the Cold War, have received only a bare minimum of press comment here. They have branches in all parts of the world. Through them the Communists are able to control the political reflexes of millions of men and women, many of them not consciously sympathetic to Communism. These organizations are implementing the Communist policy

of all-out opposition to "American imperialism"; they are skillfully fighting the European Recovery Program; and they are doing everything in their power to hasten the global economic crisis which would give world Communism its opportunity for a successful assault on the democracies. And yet the great majority of Americans have never heard of them. Even many among the millions who are indirectly affiliated with them do not know of their existence.

One of the reasons these organizations have not been effectively exposed can be seen in their names: they are the World Federation of Trade Unions, the Women's International Democratic Federation, the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the All-Slav Congress. The word "Communist" does not occur. These internationals purport to be "progressive coalitions" of all freedom-loving people, whose aims are "democratic unity," "anti-fascism" and similar exalted projects. The fact of Communist control is carefully blurred.

The four new internationals represent a new departure in Communist

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strategy. Before 1935 there were a number of specialized Communist internationals in the fields of labor, youth, minorities, etc. But these organizations were clearly labeled Communist; there was no question of taking other left-wing groups into them. In 1935, with the dawn of the "united front" era, Stalin killed off most of these agencies in the interest of co-operation between Communists and other left-wingers. Now the specialized internationals have been resurrected. But a new twist has been added: their aims, their compositions and their origins have been carefully disguised. The idea of the "front" organization, in which Communists have the real power while non-Communist liberals contribute the money and prestige, has been placed on a worldwide basis.

## II

The World Federation of Trade Unions, which is now 32 months old, claims 70 million members in 65 different countries. The 70 million include 6 million Americans (in the CIO), 5 million Frenchmen, 5 million Italians, 4 million Latin-Americans and 8 million Britons.

The WFTU is a lineal descendant of the Red International of Labor Unions, which was born in Moscow in the early years of the Communist Revolution and liquidated in Moscow in 1935. The leader of the Red International was A. Lozovsky, who has since graduated to an executive position in the Soviet Foreign Ministry.

The head of the American affiliate (the Trade Union Educational League, later the Trade Union Unity League) was William Z. Foster, who is now, of course, National Chairman of the American Communist Party.

During the 1920s and early 1930s the Red International, like all Communist organizations in the western world, was a militant, uncompromising minority, almost completely isolated from other left-wing movements. In France, for example, the Communist *Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire* adopted a policy of complete opposition to the policies of the powerful *Confédération Générale du Travail*. From Iceland to Chile and from Australia to the United States the Communists had cut themselves off from the main currents of working-class politics.

In July 1935, at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, this policy of intransigence was jettisoned. At this Congress the Secretary of the Comintern (now the Premier of Bulgaria), Georgi Dimitrov, made the famous "Trojan Horse" speech, advocating that the Communists adopt a "united front" policy. Instead of battling the non-Communist organizations openly, Dimitrov said, they should infiltrate them under the pretence of cooperation, and where possible gain complete control of them. This policy was quickly implemented and the Red International of Labor Unions was dissolved. In Britain the Communist unions were broken up and Party

members entered the Trades Union Congress. In France they moved into the CGT. In the United States they infiltrated the American Federation of Labor; and later, when John L. Lewis split with William Green, the Communists helped Lewis set up the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

The "united front" policy was an enormous success. Most trade unionists were not sophisticated enough to appreciate what the Communists were doing to them, and all through Europe and the United States the CP gained control of hundreds of unions. During the war the Kremlin decided that the "united front" should be put on a worldwide basis, and the Communists began to propagandize for a new labor international. In June 1943 William Z. Foster urged "that active steps be taken to achieve international trade union unity."

As the war drew to a close the Communists set to work. In March 1945 a preparatory conference was held in London. In October the World Federation of Trade Unions was formally established at a convention in Paris. On October 15 the new organization was acclaimed by *New Times*, the mouthpiece of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, which announced that the WFTU's "chief function will be to work for the realization internationally, and in each country separately, of a program of direct working-class demands in the various political, economic and social fields." In other words, the WFTU was to be more than a mere trade-union organization.

The AFL denounced the WFTU as "a revival of the Red Labor International" and refused to join. The CIO, however, was then so much in the grip of Communists that it affiliated quickly. In recent months, as the CIO has steadily purged Communists from its ranks, it has grown increasingly hostile to the policies of the WFTU. Last November the CIO attempted to place discussion of the Marshall Plan on the agenda of the WFTU's executive bureau. Louis Saillant, secretary-general of the organization, made a hurried trip to Moscow to discuss the handling of this explosive situation. When he returned, Saillant announced that there would be no meeting of the executive bureau.

This was too much for Arthur Deakin, general secretary of the British Transport and General Workers Union, who is — nominally, at least — president of the WFTU. On February 8 Deakin said:

If the WFTU is to be merely a political body dealing with those questions acceptable to the USSR, we know where we stand. . . . In other words, if there is to be a line-up of these national centers accepting the policy laid down by the Cominform against those who do not, then the decision must be regarded as a reversal of that policy, laid down by the London and Paris conferences of the WFTU, which sought to establish world trade union unity on the broadest possible basis of mutual help.

James B. Carey of the CIO finally went to Moscow to talk things over with V. V. Kutznetsov, the Soviet



labor boss who is vice-president of the WFTU. ("I had a hard time getting into Russia," Carey said later, "and I had to promise not to overthrow the government to do it.") But Carey got nowhere. The Communist unions of Russia and Eastern Europe control a majority of the WFTU's delegates, and there never was any real prospect that the CIO could use the Federation to plump for the Marshall Plan. It seems highly unlikely that either the CIO or the British Trades Union Congress will be able to remain much longer inside the WFTU, especially in view of the violently anti-American line recently taken by the organization's official bulletin.

The Soviet Union made several attempts to gain special privileges for the WFTU in the United Nations Economic and Social Council, but was voted down. The Russians also tried to have the WFTU named as the UN liaison agency in the promotion of trade union rights throughout the world. They were voted down again, and the International Labor Office (which the USSR had left in 1940, during the period of the Nazi-Soviet Pact) was appointed instead.

### III

The Soviet delegation on UNESCO also made a determined effort to gain special concessions for the Women's International Democratic Federation. The Women's International has been a "consultative agency" to the UN, enjoying status B, *i.e.*, it has the right to submit summaries of its memo-

randa for circulation among members of the Council. In attempting to expand the scope of the WIDF's activities, the Soviet Union requested that the Federation be granted the right to participate in the Council's discussions and to circulate its memoranda in full. But UNESCO decided that it would be better not to have too much to do with the Women's International.

The history of the WIDF runs almost exactly parallel to that of the WFTU. Its forerunner was the openly Communist International Congress of Women, whose leaders included Ana Pauker (now Foreign Minister of Rumania). The old Women's International had its headquarters in Moscow; the WIDF, which poses as a neutral humanitarian organization, operates from Paris.

Even the most cursory examination of the WIDF's composition demonstrates that it is far from neutral in politics. It was founded in Paris in November 1945, only a month after the WFTU was formed. The keynote speaker at the founding ceremonies was Dolores Ibarruri, secretary-general of the Spanish Communist Party. The affiliates of the Federation include the Brazilian Union of Democratic Women (led by Communist Jovina Pessoa); the Union of French Women (headed by Communist deputy Marie-Claude Vaillant Couturier); the League of Italian Women (headed by Rina Piccolate, who also belongs to the Executive Committee of the Italian Confederation of Labor, and who visited Moscow last July);

the Stalinist-controlled National Women's Bloc of Mexico; the All-India Women's Conference (which, according to the *Bombay Communist People's Age*, is "taking up a more and more democratic and patriotic stand on issues which face the country today"); and, of course, dozens of women's groups in the Soviet sphere, such as the Albanian Women's Union, the Bulgarian Women's Professional Union, etc. Altogether, the WIDF claims to speak for 100 million women.

The American affiliate is the Congress of American Women, whose secretary is Susan B. Anthony II. Last January Miss Anthony denounced the United States government before the UN Commission on the Status of Women, charging that the American Embassy in Paris had refused a visa to Mme. Françoise Leclerc. (As one of the leaders of the Communist-controlled Union of French Women, Mme. Leclerc was to have represented the WIDF at Lake Success.) Two other leaders of the CAW are Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, chairman of the Women's Commission of the U. S. Communist Party, and Thelma Dale, a member of the New York State Committee of the Party.

The Women's International Democratic Federation is nevertheless one of the best-camouflaged Communist fronts ever developed. Its political affiliations are hidden behind a mass of humanitarian rhetoric, especially in the United States, where anti-Com-

munist is frequently taken for granted among liberals. The professed aims of the Congress of American Women are the defense of legal, social and political rights of women, the promotion of close collaboration between the women of the United States and women of other countries, furthering the well-being, health and education of children, and gathering and disseminating information relating to the status of women. The 57 American women's groups who comprise the CAW have considerably less difficulty in swallowing apologies for Soviet expansion when they are tied up with, say, demands for better housing and lower prices.

#### IV

Last summer, from July 20 to August 17, a World Youth Festival was held in Prague. A large American delegation participated in the Festival. A few days after they arrived in the Czech capital, eight of the Americans realized that they had been roped into a Communist-run affair. They prepared a protest which they tried to distribute during the Festival's closing sessions, but they were stopped by a Czech army officer. When the eight young men and women returned to the United States they reported, among other things, that the Soviet exhibit at the Festival had dramatized the heroic progress of Soviet youth under Communism; while the American exhibit was concerned with such matters as lynchings, race prejudice and the prospect of a depression.

The minority report of these eight Americans stated that "the present leadership of the sponsoring organization, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, is predominantly Communist." A more sophisticated group might have made this discovery without going to Prague; the WFDY had been Communist-controlled from the day of its founding in November 1945. It is true, however, that the organization had camouflaged this fact for some time. When it was founded at the London World Youth Conference, messages of congratulations from President Truman and other allied leaders had been read to the delegates.

As soon as the executive committee of the WFDY began to issue pronouncements on the problems of the world, however, it became apparent where the control of the group lay. It became more obvious, perhaps, when the committee went to Moscow last June to plan the Festival. This Prague Festival was one of the best-prepared, most cleverly staged affairs the Communists have ever pulled off anywhere. Relays of marathon runners heralded the event by their arrival in Prague from Norway, Italy, France, England and other European countries well in advance of the Festival. The French youth affiliate organized a torch relay from Oradour, through Italy and Austria. At the Festival, delegates from the Soviet-controlled Mongolian People's Republic came close to stealing the show. They performed native dances with real charm

and skill; they exhibited paintings, carvings, embossed metals and embroidery; and they staged an opera, presented jugglers and magicians and gave demonstrations in wrestling and archery. The Americans were not quite as impressive, although a good effort was made by a blues quintet called the Scarsdale High School Gang, which performed on the soprano saxophone, cornet, bass and drums.

On the surface the Prague Festival was merely an overflowing of enthusiastic young men and women out to have a good time; perhaps that is why the event was virtually ignored in the American press. It even appears probable that many of the more naïve delegates do not, to this day, realize what they were involved in. Many of them doubtless were so impressed by the entertainment and humanitarian rhetoric that they hardly paid attention to the political speeches, lectures and resolutions which were the real business of the Festival.

But the World Federation of Democratic Youth has not restricted its activities to passing resolutions. It has helped to recruit young men and women from all over Europe to work on a strategic railway inside Yugoslavia, running from Smac to Sarajevo. This international work brigade has been operating under the People's Youth of Yugoslavia, a WFDY affiliate. Some 80,000 youths have spent at least two months working on the railway, which is, incidentally, not far from the Greek border. As far as can

be learned, no Americans have worked on the project, but Communist-controlled youth groups in Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Greece, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Belgium and France have sent volunteers.

The principal American affiliate of the World Federation of Democratic Youth is an organization calling itself the American Youth for Democracy. The AYD is the offspring of the Young Communist League, which was dissolved in New York on October 16, 1943. On October 17 the AYD was formed. Its leaders were the same men who had run the YCL; and there has never been a time since then that the AYD was not entirely under Communist control.

The World Federation of Democratic Youth works closely with another worldwide youth movement, the International Students Union. The ISU has not thus far been able to achieve the impressive membership of the WFDY, largely because it is more openly a Communist-controlled movement. It has, however, been successful in organizing a work brigade in Albania similar to the WFDY's project in Yugoslavia. Some 11,000 young men and women have voluntarily labored on a railway from Durres to Elbasan, and, according to Radio Tirana, the work camp has "become a truly educational center." When the International Students Union was formed in Prague last August, it was boycotted by students' groups from Austria and the Netherlands. The Netherlands delegation is-

sued a heated announcement at the meeting, which said, in part:

Every minute of this Congress, we are talking about democracy. But you can depend on this: We in the Netherlands know what democracy means; it is something quite different from the policy of domination that some groups have shown at this Congress toward the minorities in the Congress. And let's not talk about the fight against fascism while there are among us delegates who do not dare to express their personal opinion, for fear of getting into difficulties with their governments back home.

## V

Pan-Slavism, like Pan-Germanism, has always had a terrific emotional impact on the nationalities affected by it. That Stalin (who is not himself a Slav) is aware of the potentialities of the movement can be deduced from a glance at the elaborate organization of the Pan-Slav movement. The core is the All-Slav Committee of the USSR, headed by Lieutenant-General A. S. Gundorov in Moscow. The next layer is the Five-Nation Slav Alliance between the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia. General Gundorov, who dictated the aims and organized the machinery of this alliance at a meeting in Belgrade in December 1946, stated that: "Slav organizations, together with progressive international organizations, should wage an untiring battle against the remnants of fascism and warmongers. . . . They should fight against the spreading of lies against the Soviet Union and Slav

countries, and they should spread true information concerning themselves."

The worldwide Slav organization, the outer layer of the movement, is the All-Slav Congress. Last June, delegates to the All-Slav Congress met in Warsaw to plan a course of action. Men and women of Slav descent, even those from predominantly Anglo-Saxon and Latin countries, were enrolled in the new international, which is only now beginning to demonstrate its potential strength. Arrangements have been made to hold a gigantic All-Slav Congress in Prague later this year; it will be timed to coincide with the hundredth anniversary of the first Slav Congress, held in Prague in 1848. This first Slav Congress was strongly influenced by Tsarist Russia. By playing skillfully on the racial bonds between the Slavs in the western world and their Mother Russia, the new All-Slav Congress expects to enlist a formidable body of opinion in support of Soviet foreign policy.

The American affiliate of this new international is the American Slav Congress. When this organization as-

sembled in New York in November 1946, it was addressed by Tsola Dragitcheva, the Communist boss of Bulgaria, and by other Communist leaders from abroad. In dozens of different ways, the American Slav Congress has sought to bind Slavic groups in the United States to the Communist régimes of Eastern Europe. They have been asked to support demands for "an all-Slav Trieste," for the annexation of Grecian Thrace by Bulgaria, and for similar projects. In its methods and purposes, the American Slav Congress reminds one of nothing so much as the late German-American Bund.

Millions of Americans who believe in democracy and have only a horror for police-state methods have nevertheless allowed themselves to be enlisted in Communist internationals like the All-Slav Congress, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, the Women's International Democratic Federation and the World Federation of Trade Unions. For the sake of those Americans, as well as for the rest of us, these new Communist internationals must be publicized and recognized for what they are.



## SHIP NEWS REPORTERS

BY CAROLINE BIRD MENUEZ

IT WAS 7 A.M. Passengers on the *Elizabeth* could just make out the Battery, where the tip of Manhattan steps down uncertainly from the windy heights of finance. The contemplative watched the Customs House distill itself out of the fog and dark. Few talked. Few gave any thought to the customs cutter which would churn across the harbor to greet them.

Lacking breakfast, the seedily-turned-out newsmen waiting to board the Coast Guard cutter at Pier 9 were willing, for once, to be quiet. They were of various sizes and shapes, as dissimilar as odd socks in a mending basket. Long familiarity had rendered them insensible of each other's presence. No eyes met, but each man was privately cursing the Cunard press agent, who should have arrived long ago with the passenger list. The customs officer was not apt to hold the cutter much longer.

"So finally we follows this press agent down to the cabin of this French follies tomato like he'd been pestering us to do all the way up the bay," one of the photographers broke

out. "We lined up a couple of shots but she didn't get the idea, and then Vince here tells this press agent feller — she didn't know a word of English — he tells this press agent feller, 'Hey Jack,' he says, 'tell her no go, some more legs and you know — tell her to lift her dress up.' Well, this French feller and the girl jabber awhile in French and she turns and stares at us, then shrugs and reaches down" — he bent down and drew his hands from his knees to illustrate — "and pulls her dress right off, and you should've seen Hamshar's eyes pop when he seen she didn't have anything on but a piece of string."

"Whad'ya mean, *my* eyes pop?" another of the group demanded suddenly. "You were so stupefied you couldn't get your camera up, much less. . . ."

"I laid out two bits apiece for these bulbs," the camera man replied, tapping a leather case slung from his shoulder, "and my paper don't run no naked dames. As it was we didn't get a single decent shot off the *America* and only one on the *Veendam*. Five hours out there yesterday and nothing

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CAROLINE BIRD MENUEZ, formerly worked with *Fortune* and the *Journal of Commerce*, and she contributed an article on the latter to the December 1946 *AMERICAN MERCURY*.

to show the desk for it but one cheese-cake and the paper as tight as a snare drum."

Irritation and annoyance furrowed every face in the group, and no one else showed any sign of listening to the chatter. A taxi drew up then and its single passenger hustled towards them with a sheaf of typewritten papers and a smile of synthetic welcome, apology and recognition. The smile remained fixed on his face as he hurried from one to another, handing each several long sheets stapled together. These the newsmen studied in silence as they boarded the cutter and sought warm places out of the wind.

For several moments no one spoke. The lines were cast off. A Diesel engine sputtered, then took up a steady rumbling while the cutter backed slowly out from the pier and began swinging around in the stream. "Another UN delegation," one of the reporters remarked slowly to the press agent. "Cary Grant, Molotov, Bevin—Christ, Bill, you ought to know better than to drag us down here at 7 A.M. for this ship."

## II

In some such way does the working day begin for the score of ship news reporters who are specialists in the words which Very Important People arriving at the world's largest port can be persuaded to drop in the fretful interval between the arrival and departure of the customs cutter. They do not cover the waterfront. Al-

though they are proud trenchermen, they do not like to be confused with the "knife and fork" experts who cover the shipping industry for marine trade journals which encourage their reporters to double as advertising space salesmen. About the only thing any of them will admit to knowing about a ship is how to climb a Jacob's ladder.

Getting off the cutter on a windy morning can be strenuous sport, especially if heavy seas are running. Photographers with their heavy equipment get more exercise out of it than reporters, but once aboard all feel entitled to breakfast. Press agents for shipping lines, who worry about the competition of other ships docking the same morning, see to it that they get the best the ship can provide. Since only a few papers have more than one man covering ship arrivals, the boys divide the work on busy days and pool their findings, but no one likes to draw a ship from South Africa, which is apt to produce nothing more exciting than scrambled dehydrated eggs.

Over breakfast the press allows itself to be filled in on any incidents of the voyage, such as storms, births or deaths, which might serve as a lead to bundle up the collection of quotes to be expected from the first-class passenger list. Hot names are checked off for public interview, and a few reporters are instructed to seek out, on behalf of all, any shy personages the press agent for the line cannot flatter into appearing at the press



conference in one of the ship's saloons.

Once the victims are lined up, each man shoots for what his sheet likes best. The Hearst papers and the tabloids are frankly interested in sex, and their men go straight to the actresses known to specialize in the subject. Their camera men are masters at getting "cheesecake," maneuvering willing owners of perfect legs into revealing perches on the rail. (Bill Marsden, a product of Hearst in his salad days, used to explain his wants in terms of his favorite dessert. "That's right, miss," he would smile ingratiatingly at a lady pretending to misunderstand, "just a little more cheesecake.")

The rest of them bother their heads little, if at all, over the intricacies of economics, science, finance, politics or any of the deep matters with which visiting dignitaries love to mark their American landings. They just ask simple questions and sometimes get the results which cub reporters expect of the artless direct query. No one but a ship news reporter would have asked Molotov what he thought of Russian-American relations; political news specialists were enraged when Molotov gave an answer which made all the front pages in town. But then, even in the dark twenties, no one but a ship news reporter would have addressed Helen Hayes' husband as "Mr. Hayes" on the same day he congratulated Norma Shearer on her part in *Secrets*, a hit played by Mary Pickford.

Ship news reporters are men of sim-

ple-hearted good will. It was rumored that Dick Reagan, who used to be with the *Herald Tribune*, would have become a Trappist monk if it had not been for the vow of silence. As it is, the boys get more practice telling stories than writing them. When talked out, they go home to patient wives immured in the upper halves of two-family houses in the suburbs and dream burlesque sequences. They hate junior Naval officers, publicity-shy public figures, officious captains, Maritime Day ceremonies, after-dinner speeches, most banquet food, warm beer and getting up at dawn. They like cold beer, cards and practical jokes. Their vices are seldom generous, and their jests turn on impotence rather than passion. As a group they are shiftless, loyal and gabby.

Ship news reporters get so much encouragement in their faith that the world owes them a living that they have become the spoiled darlings of the press. Their extra-curricular emoluments are almost as impressive as the lagniappe regularly offered to drama critics and sports writers. Thanks to recent efforts of the Newspaper Guild, their families are housed and clothed like those of any other \$5000-a-year serfs, but rises in the take-home pay have made no change in the strictly personal standard of eating, drinking and entertainment provided them from time out of mind by shipping lines solicitous of their difficult good will. When any paid-up member of the Ship News Reporters Association gets hungry, he simply

calls the most conveniently located press agent and invites himself and friend to the Bowling Green, Busto's, Oscar's Old Delmonico or the Whitehall Club. The press agent, who gets his own lunch out of it, complies with alacrity. Both parties agree that anyone who gets stuck with a restaurant check is a dope.

### III

The regular graft is small stuff compared with the goings on when a newly chartered liner sets out for her shakedown cruise with a cargo of corporation executives, Maritime Commission bigwigs and Presidential timber. The harbor is no sooner cleared than the decks are awash with champagne, bonded whisky and cold beer. Full course *à la carte* meals appear on demand. Cigarettes, too, are always provided by the shipping line, but during national emergencies there are no girls. Junior Naval officers, if any, are kept from sight. Speeches, if any, are off the record; in the whole maritime history of the United States, none has been reported by the press. Nevertheless, some ship news reporters are always aboard. When the *America* shook down in 1940, the shipping editor of the *Journal of Commerce* chose a moment of temporary nakedness to prove he could turn cartwheels her entire stem-to-stern length. Below decks, few chairs in the saloon survived the trip unbroken.

The junkets aren't what they used to be, though. When the *America* was

returned to civilian life with appropriate ceremonies, the lucky newsmen came back considerably reddened from three days of snoozing in the sun, but otherwise none the worse for wear. "It was a good trip," one of them commented dreamily over a slow beer, "strictly stag, but damn good sturgeon." Ship news reporters prize invitations to shakedown cruises as service stripes of seniority in the profession. Shipping lines deal them out like bids to a White House dinner.

One of the perennial invitees is Durward Primrose, who attracted some attention by arriving one night at a fancy ball aboard the *Normandie* attired as Daniel Boone, complete with coonskin cap, powder horn and muzzle-loading squirrel gun — all carefully selected by Brooks Brothers as the proper attire for a short, stocky man in his early sixties with a nearly bald head and a large florid face. The first thing he did, on finding everyone else in white tie and tails, was to launch a blasphemous search for the French Line publicity agent who had assured him that *en costume* meant just what it said. Primrose finally located him alone in the bar, dressed as a Blackfoot Indian chief, looking as thoroughly uneasy and unconvincing in it as Calvin Coolidge.

Although he is a member of the outcast marine trade press, "Prim" is dearly loved by all good ship news reporters by virtue of his special position as public relations man for the shipping industry. It is he who presides over the Waldorf suite set aside for

the comfort and convenience of the press at meetings of the Merchant Marine Conference and the Propeller Club. The Primrose path at the Waldorf is widely reported to be fabulous, and enough highly personal adventures develop in the annual three-day get-togethers to supply conversation for the rest of the year.

Prim complains that he does not get proper credit for the tact with which he builds these affairs into classics. Shipping lines are individually helpless before the appetites of a seasoned newsman, but in congress assembled they find temporary strength. Since the blame is not likely to fall on any one of them, they feel safe in groaning softly at the sight of lobster dinners being washed down reportorial throats with champagne. "Where did all those girls come from?" some accountant is apt to ask Prim sharply. Prim's invariable reply is that he invites the nicest girls he knows to entertain the press — a release which is invariably greeted with conventional unprintables by the affected gentlemen. As the laughter dies away, the luckless accountant can only mutter that whatever Prim has in the press suite, it is diverting conveners from speeches.

#### IV

Ship news reporters have a good thing, and most of them have the grace to know it. Before the war they lived a leisurely communal life in a butt-littered room their papers joined in maintaining at the old Barge Office at the foot of Pier 9, near the Aquar-

ium. Each member of the Ship News Reporters Association had his own desk and phone, but all shared the services of two attendants who watched the Western Union ticker that reported the passage of ships past Ambrose Light.

There, within sight and sound of harbor movements, the happy few whiled many a long and golden afternoon away. Outside the door the customs cutter floated comfortably within view and never left without detailing a man to break up the poker game inside. Faithful harbor employees could be relied upon to phone in word of sinkings, sea serpents or quickie strikes. The only notes of enterprise which ever jarred the clublike atmosphere of the warm little room were the homing pigeons which *Journal-American* camera men carried around to fly their negatives back in time for the afternoon papers. (Passengers docking on morning ships were sometimes astonished to find that they could read all about their arrival as soon as they stepped off the gangplank.)

The Samuel Johnson of this genial coffee shop was T. Walter ("Skipper") Williams, a British subject of considerable dignity, who wore butterfly collars and spiced his conversation with such Arabic street cries as "*Maalesh*" ("I don't care"). According to his own accounts, which nobody ever dared to question, he had run away from home to become a deckboy on a sailing vessel and turned up in South Africa in time to cover

the Boer War for Lord Northcliffe's *Daily Mail*. In 1905 he joined the staff of the *New York Times* and rapidly improved on the lordly manners of its newsgatherers.

As a reporter, Skipper had style. He exacted instinctive respect from the gilded men of an era in which dignitaries were not afraid to behave as such. J. P. Morgan and Rabbi Wise granted him exclusive interviews. Mme. Jeritza launched her many grand arrivals in America by kissing him as soon as he had clambered up the Jacob's ladder. Skipper used to wait until his colleagues had exhausted the possibilities of a shipload of newsmakers and then saunter aboard to pay a formal call of welcome on publicity-shy transatlantic commuters hiding in their cabins.

On one arrival of that old four-stacker, the *Mauretania*, he found no passengers worth his interest and consented to take a small drink with the ship's officers. The next day the *New York Times* was the only paper in town to carry the disturbing intelligence that the *Mauretania* had sighted a sea serpent off Havana, in proof whereof it published an on-the-spot sketch by her second officer. When there were no real sea serpents, Skipper got them past the *Times* copy desk by writing them up as the experiences of his old friend F. Marmaduke Mizzle, a caraway seed merchant of Mincing Lane.

These journalistic exploits did not excite as much envy in the old Barge Office as did the invidious marks of

special attention which Skipper exacted as a matter of right. He frequently importuned travelers bound for England to bring him back a round tin of Peak Freen's Albert biscuits, or a jar of the Tiptree's strawberry jam his mother used to buy, and he never quite believed their apologetic reports that the items had disappeared from London stores these twenty years. Some of his victims and some ship news reporters attempted to retaliate with similar requests to Skipper when he went abroad, but they were always disappointed by his skill at locating the objects required. "It wasn't just graft with Skipper," one of them reminisces now, "he just wanted to be sure you had him on your mind while you were out of his reach."

Reporters were particularly bitter about the spring colds which they claimed Skipper used to get in time to cadge a southern cruise from sympathetic steamship lines. Bill Seabrook of the Holland-America Line acknowledges that Skipper once asked him to contribute a nickel toward a dime that Mrs. Skipper wanted to give to a beggar, but Seabrook insists that the colds were genuine. "Skipper never had to pretend anything to get a free ticket to any port on any line," he claims proudly.

Skipper always managed to approach subway turnstiles behind the man who had already reached into his change pocket. The only man who ever outfumbled him was Sam Untermyer, the criminal lawyer, who once got him to make up \$8.39 of a check

he was footing for a shore party from the *Belgenland*, on which Skipper was deadheading around the world. Years later, Skipper tried to collect from Untermeyer's nephew, Lawrence Steinhardt, who passed through Skipper's beat on ambassadorial missions to Turkey and Russia.

Skipper died less than a year after security regulations put the harbor and even the docks out of bounds. The ship news reporters scattered, some to the services and some to less colorful beats. Dick Reagan of the *Herald Tribune* became an aide to an admiral at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Bill Marsden, the photographer who put his favorite dessert into the dictionary of slang, drifted away to a shipyard and never returned. Bob Wilder of the New York *Sun* is in Hollywood, writing books which are described by his ex-colleagues as featuring sex in every chapter. Jim Lanehart of the *Journal-American* is dead.

The Army arranged matters so that the new gang of ship news men could

get as far as the docks to meet the bride ships, but the first time they were allowed to go down the bay was on July 7, 1946, when the Holland-America's new ship, *Westerdam*, came in. Since then, they've been back at the grind, although things aren't quite the same. The old barge office is being torn down and the new quarters at 45 Broadway are too far away from the cutter for idling. Most of the men check the ticker by phone, and when they do foregather, the conversation is desultory. "Looks as if Truman is going to give this feller Stalin the business," one of them murmured provocatively a few months ago. "Did you see Barbara Stanwyck when she got off the *America*?" another interrupted eagerly. "Not a snitch of makeup. Not a bit. Sure, I got close enough."

No one had anything to say, so he put a sheet of copy paper into his typewriter and wrote: "Girls, you aren't going to believe a word of this. . . ."

## PHRASE ORIGINS—31

TO MAKE NO BONES ABOUT IT: This phrase originally occurred in the form, "to find bones in." It referred to the finding of bones in soup as an obstacle to swallowing the soup easily. Hence, "to make bones" of or about a matter meant to be hesitant, to find objections and obstacles. The modern meaning of "to make no bones" means to speak without hesitation, to come directly to grips with an issue, and to speak frankly and boldly as if no obstacles, or "bones," existed.

MORRIS ROSENBLUM

# THE CHANGELESS WAYS OF MAN

BY CLELLAN S. FORD

THE people of the earth live startlingly different lives. If all the varied ways of living could be pictured, the resulting panorama would seem incredible. From the far north would come a picture of fur-clad Eskimos smacking their lips over raw blubber and rotten bird's eggs, while in South America naked aborigines broil whole monkeys over a small fire in anticipation of a succulent feast. In Africa a terrified victim of sorcery is slowly dying, while in America a condemned man enjoys his last meal before going to the electric chair. From various parts of the world would come living scenes such as these in a bewildering profusion.

The diversity of lifeways is a fact. More than that it is a challenge. Our American way of life is but one among several experiments in civilization. Even if we limit our considerations to the peoples who have developed a written language, we represent only one of about twenty literate cultures. And if we extend the range of our perception to non-literate peoples who have nonetheless developed distinctive and successful ways of living, we find ourselves to be one of perhaps

five or six thousand different cultures. Are these other ways of life fundamentally different from our own or are there basic uniformities which underlie differences in culture? How about our own way of life? Is it so much better in every way from the others?

The lifeways of people in societies other than our own seem to us strange and bizarre. Sometimes it is hard to believe that these other people who practice such peculiar customs are human beings. People who regularly and without apparent conscience abandon the aged, eat their human enemies, practice bigamy and even trigamy, distort their own features by stretching the earlobe six or seven inches long or filing the teeth to sharp points or who callously destroy any baby so unfortunate as to be one of twins, must assuredly be different in some fundamental sense from our own friends and acquaintances.

Yet the findings of careful scientific investigation tell us that all people, regardless of either their customs or their physical appearance, are of the same biological race and share the same essential anatomical and physio-

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logical characteristics. The physical differences of the so-called "human races" are predominantly the result of physical adaptations to such factors as climate and diet. The cultural differences are an expression of behavioral adjustments to the problems of life. Peculiarly enough, the brotherhood of mankind is an actual fact.

If all people are essentially alike it may be worth while to look briefly at the way we stand on a few basic issues in comparison to the other societies of the world. With respect to form of marriage we are decidedly in the minority. Monogamous peoples compose something less than one fourth of the total. The strictness of our divorce laws is paralleled in relatively few societies. Our system of reckoning descent with its equal emphasis on the male and female sides of the family is found in less than one fourth of all societies. The majority are patrilineal, *i.e.*, consider the child to belong only to that group to which his father belongs. (And there are more matrilineal societies than there are bilateral ones like our own.) Our strict regulation of sexual behavior, particularly during adolescence, is practically unequalled elsewhere. We wean our babies sooner than most people, train them to be cleanly at a younger age and clamp down on their expressions of aggression more severely. Our extreme revulsion at the thought of infanticide is shared by less than one third of all known societies.

It would be possible, of course, to argue that these cultural differences

are merely indications of our own superiority. That our society is in the minority with respect to these matters simply means that we are just that much more advanced than most. If we are monogamous, restrict the sexual behavior of adolescents, use the simplest system of descent and teach our children good manners early, these are just evidence of our advanced civilization. Neither do these other people have automobiles, telephones, universities or newspapers!

Perhaps this is a reasonable point of view, but before leaping to such a conclusion it may be of some interest to ask the question: what about the other people who share some of our customs? Are they the most advanced and civilized people from our standpoint?

## II

It may surprise some people to learn that monogamy, for example, which we prize so much as a trait of civilization, is also practiced by some of the most backward people on earth, like the Witoto of Amazonia who can count no higher than twenty and who practice a ceremonial cannibalism. The ancient Veddas of Ceylon were also monogamous. People preferring polygamy, on the other hand, include the highly civilized Incas, Aztecs and Chinese. Similarly, our bilateral system of descent which we think to be the most sensible since it falls in line with biological theory is used by primitive peoples whose knowledge of heredity is extraordinarily limited.



The same system we use is followed by a large number of North American Indian tribes, several Polynesian peoples including the native Samoans, Tongans, and Hawaiians and by the aborigines of the Andaman Islands. The Yaghan of the southern tip of South America who were so backward that in a frosty climate they never knew enough to make or wear clothing also used this system of reckoning descent. In the same way it would be possible to enumerate societies of quite inferior technology and social development who share with us our early insistence on cleanliness training and weaning of babies, and insist with us that no matter how deformed or feeble-minded a child may be at birth it has the right to live and receive every care to prolong its life. Conversely, many societies, from our point of view highly civilized, differ sharply from us on many other basic issues.

The peoples of the earth, then, live their lives in a tremendous variety of ways. Moreover, many of our customs are shared by a minority of societies that in other respects seem neither advanced nor civilized. To the majority of peoples some of our customs would seem just as bizarre and odd as theirs do to us. Life is really being lived in about as many different ways as there are societies on earth. The discovery of this cultural relativity has done a great service to scientific thinking about human behavior. The diversity of culture, together with the fact that customs are continuously

changing within the same society, has killed the stultifying notion that culture and civilization are to be explained in terms of race or instinct. The customs of one people can no longer be thought of as differing from those of another simply because the members of the two societies vary in physical characteristics or in attendant hereditary instincts. Biology cannot explain why American culture differs from that of the Chinese.

At the same time, cultural relativity tends to obscure that fact that, despite all the differences in the customs of people, there are a great many cross-cultural uniformities. Mankind is not only essentially similar anatomically and physiologically, there is a basic uniformity of culture and civilization for all people, literate or non-literate, primitive or advanced. Let us turn, therefore, to some of the social characteristics common to human societies.

First we may note that all human beings live as the members of a social group or society to which they feel themselves to belong. Every such human society has a language which may or may not be shared by neighboring peoples. Moreover each of the languages of the world is susceptible to the same type of analysis. Thus every language, whether it be that of the Australian aborigines or that of modern Americans, has its characteristic sound-units (phonemes), meaningful combinations of sound-units (words), and standard rules for the joining of words together to form sentences (grammar). Moreover all

these languages seem to be about equal as a means of communication.

Every human society has its characteristic moral code, and some notions of what constitutes morality are universal. For every people rape, murder, in-group cannibalism, and primary incest, *i.e.*, sexual intercourse with one's own child, brother or sister, or parent, are considered amoral and are strictly forbidden under penalty of heavy sanction. The customs of abortion, infanticide or killing the aged are not real exceptions to the universality of the law against murder. In every instance the distinction is made between murder, *i.e.*, killing a member of the in-group, as opposed to killing someone who is considered to be not yet a member of the society or one who has left the in-group. Thus, too, do we justify the killing of criminals. No longer members of our society, prisoners lose their personal names and are identified only by the numbers on their uniforms. In addition to moral codes, each society has its characteristic rules of etiquette. There are no people who do not define appropriate behavior between child and parent, young and old, man and woman, and between kinsmen.

No people lack knowledge of the use of fire. In every society, no matter how primitive, cooking is an art. With respect to food, too, it is interesting that there are no known societies in which some perfectly edible foods are not forbidden to the members, at least on certain occasions. Numerous examples of such food

taboos in our own society will come to mind. Some are backed by religious precept, as the Catholic rule against eating meat on Friday; some are imposed by the government, as in the recent proscription against eggs on Thursday; others are simply imbedded in the revulsion of the people, as in our society for many persons there is horror and disgust expressed at the thought of eating the flesh of dogs, cats, horses or human beings. Restrictions on the use of available foods are not the same for all people. Some people relish the foods we detest, and many of the foods we enjoy most seem repulsive to others. But no people avail themselves of all the edible foods to which they have access.

Marriage and the family are universal. To be sure, the wedding ceremony is omitted in some societies, and for most people marriage is not the prerequisite to sexual experience. As a matter of fact, among some people, such as the Pukapukans of Polynesia, the woman who proves herself fertile by bearing a child before marriage is especially desired as a wife. But everywhere men and women join together to form a family unit. The economic and educational functions of the family are also universal. In every society there exists some division of labor between the sexes which insures the support of family and children. Though notions of how best to bring up one's children vary greatly, all people have some solution to the problems which inevitably arise. Children everywhere are taught to follow the conventional

rules of cleanliness. They are always weaned, though it may be at the age of five or even later (as among the Polar Eskimo). They are always taught to eat, talk and act correctly, to follow the precepts of the society to which they belong and to conform to the prevailing moral code. They are taught the techniques and skills befitting their sex and station in life. Eventually they take up their positions as adults in their society. Within the family they are taught to suppress their sexual impulses, though often encouraged early in life to enjoy themselves outside the barrier imposed by the incest taboo. Within the society they are taught to suppress their tendencies toward expressing aggression, though often encouraged in the arts of hunting and warfare from early years. Everywhere the family acts as the primary socializing mechanism whereby children learn to take their place in the society.

### III

Religion is universal for human societies. No people have been discovered who do not believe that each person has a soul. All have a firm conviction in the supernatural. Religious beliefs everywhere find systematic expression in funeral rites and mourning customs. While the specific ways in which grief is shown vary from society to society, all people mourn their dead and show their regret at the passing of one of their number. Widows in particular follow prescribed and usually elaborate mourning customs, which include

a period of sexual abstinence. It may be surprising too that dream interpretation and divination are known to every society. Also universal is the supplication of the supernatural, either by actual sacrifice or through some ritual such as prayer, as a means of obtaining results which otherwise are thought to be unattainable.

The twentieth-century woman in our society does not have an option on the use of cosmetics and adornment. Every society seems to consider the natural physical appearance of its members somehow lacking. Methods of changing the features vary from flattening the head, stretching the earlobes, filing the teeth, distending the lips, and scarifying or tattooing the skin, to the use of somewhat less permanent beautifiers such as oils and pigments to scent and color the hair, face or entire body. Nor are ornaments ever lacking in human societies, ranging all the way from brightly colored clothing to anklets, bracelets, necklaces, and rings. As seen in cross-cultural perspective both sexes seem to be equally vain in this respect. Hair-styles are a universal feature of human society, though in some the men wear their hair long while the women wear theirs short. Quite as one might expect, the various ways of improving on the physical appearance of the human body are given varied justifications in different societies. Religious, medical, erotic and artistic rationalizations top the list. One basic utility of such devices is that of identifying the person as a member of the

in-group. Perhaps the most profound reason ever advanced by an aborigine is this: "We are men and do not want to look like monkeys."

Decorative art is found among all peoples, savage or civilized. And many people whose ways of life seem most primitive have developed art forms that command the respect of the art connoisseur. Just why every people should feel that decoration enhances the beauty of material objects is somewhat of a mystery. But the fact remains that decorative art has flourished since the days of the cave man a million years ago. Nor are there any people to whom music and dancing are unknown. Percussion, wind and string instruments of many different kinds are widely used. Drums of one type or another are found in every society, and everywhere rhythmic beats accompany choreographic movements of the body — a basic form of recreational exercise for every known people. Dancing is shared by the members of the group; it is also a spectacle performed by individuals skilled in the profession. The notion of men and women dancing together in a close embrace, however, is not a

common pattern. This variation of the worldwide pastime is almost exclusively confined to Western European civilization.

Many more examples might be added, but those presented substantiate the point that there is a common denominator of human culture. We are one society among many and the lifeways of each people are in a sense unique. Beneath the differences lies a foundation of universal human interests. Everywhere people struggle to satisfy the same basic needs and to attain common goals under essentially similar conditions. Everywhere human adaptive behavior follows the same general laws and principles. Men must live in the company of their fellows and try to adjust their ways to the requirements of social life. Fundamental problems posed to all mankind lead inevitably to a universal culture base. And perhaps upon this common platform of morals, aims and satisfactions there may in time be built a world society within which each may seek his or her happiness in ways that harmonize with the requirements of world civilization.

## CONCLUSION

BY BEN RAY REDMAN

Only the years know where the days have gone,  
And we have lost the years through some strange fumbling.  
Now all is emptiness between birth's cry  
And stale senility's unheeded mumbling.

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# DOWN TO EARTH

by ALAN DEVOE

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## TROPISMS

MORALISTS have for ages found it effective to reinforce their chidings of sinners by referring them to the kingdom of animals and pointing out that the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air do not commit such offenses. Human sluggards are referred to the example of ants, which are unmistakably busy almost constantly upon their formic errands. It is pointed out that animals, in their wild free state, are not given to gluttony, or to avarice, or to drunkenness or excessive lust or concupiscence or the making of war.

All of which is quite true, and the reminder may have been serviceable in saving more than one simple-minded man from making a ruin of his life. The usefulness of animals as moral exemplars, however, is strictly limited. For virtue has two sides. On the merely negative side, virtue means simply abstention from wrong-doing. In urging this aspect of virtue, which is its colder and lesser side, there may be a certain small usefulness in citing

the behavior of animals. But virtue, on its positive side, means the active exercise of *right-doing*. It means the exercise of the lovely thing called tenderness. Going higher, it means the lifting and transfiguring of tenderness into the self-forgetting and enormous pity that goes by the mystical name of charity. It means the exercise of love, not merely in the sense of the relatively simple and earth-close love called *eros*, but in the sense of that piercing and powerful love that transcends all earthly-practical considerations and that Saint Paul designated by the name of *agape*.

Only at its least does virtue mean anything so merely prim and prudent as refraining from getting drunk every day at lunch. It means infinitely more enormous things, like the kind of pledged devotion to something outside ourselves that is worthy to be called faith. It means the sort of stalwart confidence, under disaster, that at its most unassuming is at least the virtue of cheerfulness and in its profoundest exercise can achieve to the virtue of hope. Virtue is not

ing so cold or so sensible as just abstention. It is action. It is action taken with glad obedience, with the full warmth of the heart, upon certain profoundly felt sympathies and sensibilities in our human selves which in our deepest depths we know to be more commanding than any considerations of mere chilly prudence, mere self-interest, mere practicality or pride.

In exhorting sinners to the practice of virtue, of this positive sort, a moralist will not find it helpful to refer to the example of the animals. He will find it fatal. For as a fox refrains from drunkenness, so does a fox refrain from the exercise of any compassion. Ants commit no sins of sloth; nor do they ever for an instant halt in the quick, practical rounds of their self-serving lives to perform one act of charity. It indeed belongs to man alone to be avaricious, to plunge into excesses of intemperance and lust, to be lazy, to be drunken, to make war. But it also belongs to man alone to feel and act upon the sweet command of pity. It is his prerogative, as it is no raccoon's, to give himself in love. He alone can do all the absurd and beautiful things that are outside the mere practicality and animality of life: fond and foolish things like founding societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, or like being generous toward those whom he knows to be undeserving, or like loving the unlovable. It is only he, that strange and solitary figure under the sun, who can have faith, and

can have hope, and can have charity.

Animals are not moral, neither are they immoral. They are simply excluded from the whole realm of intellect and spirit in which our human moral values have their being. Into the consciousness of animals there may come little glimmers of what may properly be called thought, or even, by a slight stretch of exact definition, reason. But it is only such a glimmer of thought, such a species of awareness, as is given also to small children. There comes piercing into the animal's dim awareness, as into the little child's, no shaft of that strange and unearthly light in the gleam of which is revealed the moral landscape.

Animals' lives are for the most part simply appetitive, unconscious, impulsive. Their world is that of an amoral spontaneity. They feel; they act. What they act upon, when it is not such sensual simplicities as hunger or thirst or such emotional simplicities as fear or anger, is largely such drives as the forces that go by the name of tropisms. Tropisms have something of the relentless force of machinery. They have nothing of the quality of consciousness or of intention.

## II

A tropism is defined as a specific orienting response to some external stimulus. That stimulus may be a touch; it may be the brightness of light; it may be the shadow of darkness; it may be the feel of a certain configuration in the earth; it may be

any of innumerable kinds of thing. An animal exhibits its tropism, negative or positive, as it is attracted or repelled by whatever the stimulus may be.

We are all familiar enough with the common compulsive behavior of plants. Every milkweed and honeysuckle on this green planet is impelled to thrust toward the sun. The being called a plant does not elect to seek the sun. It grows sunward as necessarily as it curls its tendrils around an arbor-slat or any other support it encounters. A tendril curls around a support because, when it touches it, growth on the side of the shoot that makes the contact is reduced thereby. Growth on the outer side continues normally. The necessary and inevitable result is that the tendril must bend and curl around what it has touched.

The tropisms of animals have almost this same character of necessity. The commonest tropism we may see in action is the positive phototropism of moths. They are pulled and tugged toward the light, and they must accede even when the light is the light of fire, so that their obedience means their death. Again, bees are led on their nuptial flight by positive phototropism. They are tugged toward the sky, the sun. Later, the queens are under the compulsion of a different manifestation of tropism. They are negatively phototropic, and the urge to darkness seizes them. They are bound to the dark interior of the hive.

In addition to these common tro-

pisms, there are a score of others, all enormously influential in animal life, all ticketed with Greek-compound scientific names. There is geotropism and there is rheotropism. There are chemotropism, hydrotropism, stereotropism, and the kind of sensitivity termed thigmotaxis. What most of them mean is evident enough. Chemotropisms are certain animals' responsive movements toward or away from chemical stimuli. Geotropism impels animals toward or away from the earth, hydrotropism is the attraction toward moisture (as in the case, for instance, of house-fly grubs), and stereotropism designates the drive of an animal to place itself in a peculiarly satisfying contact with its physical environment (as for example to feel itself enclosed in a crevice). The response resoundingly called positive thigmotaxis is the response that any of us can see who cares to study the activities of a common cockroach. A cockroach turns in the direction of a weak tactual stimulus.

Thus do animals go upon the rounds of their lives: now tugged by hunger, and immediately eating; now under the spell of a bright light, and at once rushing to it; now gripped by photonegative response, and hastily creeping into a burrow; now moved by positive thigmotaxis to go scuttling around the corner of the wall and under the kitchen sink. Animals live in an enormous innocence. But it is a poor sort of innocence for moralists to cite. For it is the innocence, simply, of animal obedience. Obedience, some-



times, to the urgency of light or shadow or the pull of the sun; and obedience sometimes, with equal animal docility, to the impulse of red rage, or whimpering fear, or utterly compassionless hunger.

To say that the tropisms of animals are almost as unalterable as the drives of plants is not to say that they are completely so. Aristotle, in insisting that there are three kinds of souls — the human, the animal, and the vegetative — had hold of a truth. A plant *must* aim at the sun; it cannot be taught to do otherwise. But an animal, even a very humble one, even a cockroach, can be made to learn to inhibit a tropism. J. S. Szymanski, in 1912, taught one to do so.

Szymanski placed the cockroach in a box, half of which was made of glass and thus flooded with light and half of which was cozily dark. The cockroach, in the powerful grip of negative phototropism, naturally sought to hide in the darkened end. Every time it did so, however, it received an electric shock. Again and again it obeyed its tropism; again and again it was shocked. After a number of trials, the cockroach would run to the edge of the dark end and would then hesitate there, brushing its antennae furiously, which is the cockroach-indication of high excitement, before going in to be shocked again. Gradually these hesitations became longer and longer. Finally, on a day of triumph, the cockroach stayed firmly in the lighted end of the box and did not even go to the threshold

of the dark area for nearly a full hour. The tug of tropism had been overcome. The cockroach had transcended the mere mechanism of essential cockroachness. It had learned something.

The power of tropism being what it is, and the learning-power of cockroaches being what it is, the cockroach could never be made to hold fast to its new behavior for much longer than an hour. But, to that little degree at least, it could demonstrate that it was an animal. It was not a plant. It could assimilate simple facts of experience, and (as it were) keep them briefly in mind.

All animals can learn. The more complicated ones can learn a good deal, so that there may result a high cunning. But there never results, however long the learning, that peculiar knowledge which is a moralist's concern. Whatever things a fox can learn, there will not be included among them the knowing that it is more blessed to give than receive. Whatever an otter masters, it will not master the fact of the obligation to tenderness. There are cunning wolves; there are none compassionate. Animals have their commandments. But these are forever of a different order altogether from those that are engraved in the depths of the spirits of our strange and solitary human selves. Animals have their obediences. But of those obediences that make up the whole moral drama of our humanity, no word has been whispered to them.

## FACTS ABOUT MILK

BY JAMES A. TOBEY, DR. P. H.

AMERICANS often seem to have a rather ambivalent feeling about milk. On one hand, we produce and consume enormous quantities of it — more by far than any other nation in the world. Some 26 million cows on 5 million American farms turn out more than 57 billion quarts a year, which, someone has figured, is enough to fill a river 40 feet deep, 100 yards wide and 30 miles long. Only 3 per cent of this milk ever gets to the calves. The rest is consumed either as a fluid or as butter, cheese, ice cream, etc.

On the other hand, milk is probably the object of more morbid suspicions in this country than any other food we consume. Doctors' statements on the subject are misquoted and misinterpreted; old wives' tales are accepted as hard facts; and thousands of Americans are persuaded to have nothing to do with one of the cheapest, and most nourishing, foods that is available to them.

The anti-milk faddists have spread the word that milk is a direct cause of heart trouble and hardening of the arteries; that it is an "ally of cancer"; and that, if you must drink it, goat's

milk is better than cow's milk anyway. An especially unfortunate idea has cropped up in regard to the consumption of milk by young children. Many pediatricians have reasonably stressed the fact that it is not always wise to flood a child's system with a food that is normally about 88 per cent water; and that the milk might better be taken with cooked foods (cereals, for example) or in the form of butter and cheese. This recommendation has somehow been converted by faddists into the belief that milk itself is bad for children, and should be given them only in limited quantities.

The fact is — and virtually all physicians agree on this — that pure milk is an indispensable food for growing children (unless they are allergic to it). Every normal child should have at least a quart of milk, in some form, every day.

The use of milk by adults has aroused some differences of medical opinion, though here again there is no evidence to support the extreme fear of the food that is felt by some rumormongers. Most doctors will state without qualification that the normal

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adult will be benefited by drinking at least a pint of milk a day. A few of them, however, have indicated a suspicion that milk may contain substances conducive to the development of certain serious degenerative diseases of later life, including even gall stones and coronary troubles. The evidence in this dispute is worth examining in some detail.

## II

Among the 101 recognized constituents of cow's milk there is a chemical called cholesterol, a fat-like substance which is also present in the human body. Cholesterol exists in human milk in about the same concentration as in cow's milk. In a quart of milk there are roughly 125 milligrams of cholesterol — about  $1/250$  of an ounce.

The functions and actions of cholesterol in the human body are not yet fully understood. It is believed, however, that this chemical is part of the framework of the body cells; that it facilitates the absorption of the end products of fat. What happens is this: The liver produces a bile which is transmitted to the intestines by way of the gall bladder; this process is known to aid in the digestion of fats. A certain amount of cholesterol is normally found in this bile. If the concentration of cholesterol is too great when the bile is in the gall bladder, gall stones may result. This has led a few superficial students of medicine to speculate that milk, as well as other foods containing cholesterol, may be bad for older people.

Actually, however, the cholesterol ingested with the milk does not add to the cholesterol in the liver or the blood. Under normal conditions, the substance is manufactured by the body itself, and is used up and destroyed according to the individual's metabolic needs. If the metabolism is out of kilter, the cholesterol may be too concentrated; and gall stones will result. But this will be due to metabolic disorders; it will not be caused by drinking milk. As a matter of fact, it is surprising that milk should be condemned as an enemy of old age, for there are many other foods which contain much greater concentrations of cholesterol — eggs, livers, kidneys and brains, for example. Egg yolks and beef brains each have about 100 times as much cholesterol in them as milk has.

Two other circumstances have added to the widespread fear of cholesterol. First, there is the fact that men and women with severe cases of diabetes, arteriosclerosis and other maladies of old age often are shown to have an excess of cholesterol in their blood. The explanation of this phenomenon is simply that the chemical is caused by the disease. The disease is *not* caused by the chemical.

A second cause of confusion is the fact, established experimentally, that hardening of the arteries can be artificially induced in rabbits by dosing them with huge quantities of crystalline cholesterol, or by putting them on diets which contain unusually great amounts of the chemical. This

proves nothing, however, except that large doses of cholesterol tend to harden the arteries of this particular herbivorous animal: it does not prove that human beings will be affected similarly. As a matter of fact, it has been shown conclusively that there is no correlation between the amount of cholesterol in the human blood stream and hardening of the arteries.

There is, actually, a good deal of evidence to suggest that milk is *beneficial* to older people. Some years ago a prominent California physician reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* on the results of a test he had conducted among 501 patients. All of these men and women had been suffering from degenerative diseases, such as high blood pressure, arteriosclerosis, heart trouble, arthritis, diabetes, etc. The doctor discovered that most of the patients had been living on a diet only 12 per cent of which consisted of the so-called "protective" foods — milk, eggs, fruits and leafy vegetables. When 173 of these individuals were put on a regimen which was made up mostly (70 per cent) of the protective foods, 126 patients registered distinct improvements.

The allegation that milk is an "ally of cancer" can be dismissed as an absurdity. A statement to this effect, published some time ago in a popular magazine, inspired the editor of the *AMA Journal* to comment acidly that the article "betrays such a broad and comprehensive ignorance of milk and of cancer that one is stimulated to

wonder as to the mental age of both editors and author of this publication." There have been many attempts to link diet with human cancerous growths, but none of them has been successful.

### III

Milk, then, cannot be indicted as a cause of any of the organic maladies of later life. But there is a real danger from impure milk, which is a major carrier of disease. If milk-producing cattle are afflicted with bovine tuberculosis, brucellosis, mastitis and certain other ailments, the organisms of these diseases may be transmitted through raw milk. If a dairyman has typhoid fever, septic sore throat, scarlet fever, diphtheria or some other diseases, the raw milk may similarly be affected. In recent years, as our per capita consumption of milk has risen from around 160 quarts annually to 201 (the 1945 figure, which established a record), milk-borne epidemics have continued. We now have about 40 of them each year.

These diseases can be eliminated by the pasteurization of milk, a process which has been used in our larger cities for some 30 years, and which is fought today only by food faddists and a few deluded editors of farm journals. There is no valid argument against pasteurization. The amount of Vitamin C is somewhat diminished in the process, but the elimination of disease more than compensates for this. (There is not much Vitamin C in milk anyway.)

Pasteurization is achieved by heating the milk to 143° F. for 30 minutes, or to 160° F. for fifteen seconds, and then, in either case, cooling it immediately to 50° F. or less. In the process about 90 per cent of the bacteria in milk, and all the pathogenic bacteria, is destroyed. Obviously, pasteurization is not a substitute for cleanliness and sanitation, but it at least assures that any slip-ups on the dairy farm will not result in disease.

Officials of the United States Public Health Service estimate that about 80 per cent of all fluid market milk in this country is now pasteurized in accordance with legal requirements. (The courts have frequently sustained pasteurization laws as valid and reasonable measures for the protection of public health.) The 20 per cent which is unpasteurized represents about 5.5 billion quarts a year, most of it consumed in rural areas.

Since the adoption of compulsory pasteurization laws by New York City in 1914 there has not been one outbreak of milk-borne disease in the city, which handles about 5 million quarts of market milk every day. In upstate New York, where not all market milk is pasteurized, there have been nearly 200 epidemics in the same time. Chicago, which was the first large city to require pasteurization (in 1909), has, like New York City, been free of milk-borne sickness.

The pasteurized, homogenized, clarified, vitaminized and carefully packaged market milks sold in cities today are, of course, a far cry from the com-

mercial milk supplies of a generation ago. Since milk is low in the bone-building Vitamin D, this nutrient is now added to many milk supplies and to practically all evaporated milks. All vitamin D milks are so labeled, and usually sell at a slight premium.

Homogenized milk is milk in which the fat particles have been broken up and dispersed equally throughout the fluid; this can be done either by forcing the milk through very thin nozzles under high pressure, or by subjecting it to sonic vibrations. The process results in a stable emulsion of the fat, and produces a fine, soft curd which is easily digested. Homogenized milk has the advantage that when it is fed to infants it need not be boiled (provided it is also pasteurized), as the tougher-curd milks had to be. Goat's milk, incidentally, is naturally homogenized, which was possibly the starting point of the myth that it is generally superior to cow's milk. Actually, goat's milk and homogenized cow's milk have about the same nutritive properties.

Skimmed milk is still regarded with suspicion by many persons, who look on it as something of a fraud. It is, of course, inferior in dietary qualities to whole milk, since it lacks the fat and vitamin A, but it is actually superior to most common foods. Skimmed fluid milk yields about 10 calories to the ounce, compared to 20 for whole milk, but it contains all the unique body-building proteins, the bone-building calcium and phosphorous, the lactose, or milk sugar,

the riboflavin, or vitamin B<sub>2</sub>, and various other important ingredients of whole milk. It is, all in all, an excellent food which deserves to be used more, especially in powdered or dried form.

#### IV

Consumers are sometimes justifiably bewildered when they attempt to distinguish between the various grades of market milk that have been sold: "certified," "guaranteed," "approved," "select," "Grade A," etc. For most practical purposes, these labels all mean the same thing—that the milk is good and that its production and pasteurization have been closely supervised by the local health department.

Certified milk came into existence in 1894, after a Newark physician, Dr. Henry L. Coit, lost one of his children because of milk-borne diphtheria. Coit induced the Essex County Medical Society to appoint a Medical Milk Commission to "certify" milk which was produced in selected dairies in accordance with a rigid sanitary code. This was several years before

the development of pasteurization, but even after the pasteurization process became widespread much of the certified milk remained raw. With vitamin D added to it, it became the last word in a pure, wholesome milk. Since 1935 about half of all certified milk has been pasteurized.

Milk is not quite the perfect food. It is low in a number of the essential vitamins and in iron. Its bulk makes it difficult to consume in large quantities. The proteins in milk make thousands of persons allergic to it, and thereby forced to obtain the nutrients of milk from various combinations of other protective foods. (A few of the individuals who are allergic to fluid milk are, however, able to drink the evaporated milks in which the proteins have been somewhat altered in the heating process.)

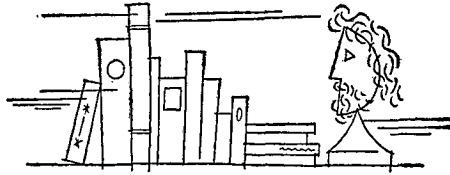
But milk is still, for the normal person, the best all-around food to be had. No food is complete and none will by itself sustain life for any length of time, but pure, fresh milk comes closest to this ideal, with the egg perhaps a close second.



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### POLITICS AND FICTION IN MEXICO

by *BERTRAM D. WOLFE*

WHAT the Mexicans call "The Revolution" began in 1910 without a conscious program, as a culmination of countless grievances and types of opposition to the three-decade-long dictatorship of President Porfirio Díaz. What began in 1910 as a mere renovating outbreak to make way for youth and end perpetual reelection, posed obscure forces that could not be contained again or given fulfillment during the next 40 years. The Revolution is still going on, trying to work out its program and come to self-understanding. Those who would truly understand it in its aspirations, elemental flareups, raw violence, perennial hope and perennial betrayal, can find no better guide than the Mexican novel.

From the outset, painters laid aside their brushes and writers their pens to enter the fray. Being artists, they continued to observe what went on around them with a deeper vision than other men. Some of the writers

put their pens to military-political use, served as literary aides-de-camp of the various guerrilla chieftains, sought to give program and meaning to the formless struggle, adapt the prevailing ideologies of our day to the Mexican scale and scene, voice the inarticulate hopes of the peons and peasants who made up all the armies. These writers meant every large and shining word they put into their manifestoes and programs. That earnest sincerity eventually gave the best of them a standard of comparison between their dreams and the recalcitrant realities, and their habit of organizing their impressions against a background of strongly felt values made them aware sooner or later of the fact that "the revolution" has not necessarily triumphed because "the men of the revolution" have won the perquisites of place and power.

Guerrilla warfare and civil war — region against region, tribe against tribe, band against band, family against family, brother against brother — are a brutal and terrible business at best. The "Federals" raid the village and carry off the cattle,



the chickens, the able-bodied men, the nubile girls; and then the "Revolutionists" come and "liberate" the town, consuming and carrying off whatever crops, cattle, men and girls may have escaped the vigilance of the "Federals." The place changes hands a third and a fourth time, until it is swept cleaner than a wheat field by a locust plague. All this is intensified by the natural poverty of an arid land, by the breakdown of all restraints and standards save the standard of force and temporary possession, and by a deep cult of violence and death in the Mexican makeup.

The *caudillos* (chieftains, bosses, leaders, heads of military bands), lacking as they did any clear or deep-rooted philosophy of society and government, were easily seduced by the privileges of power into believing that the "revolution was the government" and the government the revolution — as soon as their side had triumphed. As "generals" in the field they had "confiscated" enemy property, made forced levies upon those who had goods or money, issued new-printed pesos over their own signatures, provisioned armies with whatever they found in their paths, acquired estates for themselves and their followers by "agrarian expropriation," carried off everything movable.

As victors, these same *caudillos* had their self-designated generalships confirmed, their confiscations legalized, acquired governorships, cabinet posts, presidencies, prestige, laurels,

power and wealth. Many of the writers, especially those who entered into the battle of words when the battle of the camps was nearly at an end, were carried along into the new bureaucracy as state-designated labor leaders and political leaders, as congressmen, senators, heads of civilian departments like education, hangers-on and subsidized propagandists for the real wielders of power. But the only indispensable virtue of the artist, sincerity to the truth of his own vision, caused many of these, too, to forfeit their privileges and comfortable stipends, in a land where no man can make a living by creative writing alone, for the sake of setting down truthfully what they had felt and seen and experienced. Others were freed from their silver chains by the whirling buzz saw of Mexican political fortune, and, after beginning by telling the truth concerning the *caudillo* who had replaced their own chieftain, ended by telling the truth about their own camp and the whole sweep of events. It is at least poetic justice to be able to record that the time-servers, and those skilled in holding on despite change of régime, have not in general been able to write any of the good book that have come out of the Mexican Revolution.

## II

Of all the guerrilla chieftains, the fascinating and alternately attractive and repelling figure of Pancho Villa made the greatest appeal to intellec

tuals. His audacious and stormy career, his spectacular victories, his humble outlaw origin and deeds of Robin Hood largess, his ferocious animal cruelty, his loyalty to men nobler than himself, his touching humility before the unfathomable problems of power, his baiting of the Yankees to the North, his martyr's death in treacherous ambushade, seem made to order for the hero of a Mexican folk ballad. Social illiteracy, orgies, sporadic cruelty did not make his figure less attractive to Mexican men of letters. Martín Luís Guzmán, one of Mexico's greatest prose writers and today the editor of *Tiempo*, made his reputation as the novelist-laureate of Pancho Villa's life and miraculous deeds. With a mixture of fascination and fear, Guzmán served for a time as Villa's "Secretary" in the field. ("We were fleeing from Victoriano Huerta, the traitor, the assassin, and we were going by the very force of life and all that was most generous in it, to fall in with Pancho Villa, whose soul was not so much a man's as a jaguar's, a jaguar at the moment tamed to our purposes or what we believed to be our purposes, a jaguar over whose flank we passed a caressing hand, trembling lest he thrust into it his claws.") Out of this experience he produced two of the masterpieces of the literature of the Revolution, the story of his own life in those storm-tossed years and the story of the life of Pancho Villa.

The first, *El Aguila y la Serpiente*

(1928), translated into English as *The Eagle and the Serpent* (1930), is true autobiography: what happened to Guzmán and his friends after he joined and tried to make sense out of, or give direction to, the blind events of the Revolution. Pancho Villa is at once the hero and the anti-hero. The story is told with a novelist's skill for plot structure and selection of representative detail, and a novelist's talent for bringing men, scenes, events, motives and meanings to life. Its real theme is "the tragedy of the Revolution: the moral impossibility not to be with the Revolution and the material and psychological impossibility of attaining by means of it the aims which it set for itself." It has in it the smell and crepuscular melancholy of the Mexican plateau, "the silence that grows out of the barking of dogs and the distant sadness of muted yet audible singing." It is filled with savagely exact characterizations of chieftains and generals, with scenes of impulsive cruelty and impulsive generosity, with battles, plundering, abductions, executions. No one who has read it can ever forget such episodes as Pancho Villa at the telegraph office, repentantly trying to get the telegrapher to cancel after lunch the orders to execute captives that he had issued before eating. Or of his aide, Rodolfo Fierro, giving 300 prisoners a chance to run to a fence and jump over it — to safety — while he, single-handed, with an assistant to reload his revolvers, kills each fleeing man before

he reaches the barrier. Or the picture of his men "kindled by the racket of the firing, the accuracy of Fierro's marksmanship, the lamentations and frenzied actions of the dying, greeting with shouts of joy the spinning of the bodies as they fell, shouting, roaring, gesticulating with laughter as they fired at the heaps of human flesh wherever they noted the least sign of continued life."

Guzmán's other work on Villa is offered in the guise of an autobiography of the chieftain himself: *Las Memorias de Pancho Villa, Según el Texto Establecido y Ordenado por Martín Luis Guzmán* (*The Memoirs of Pancho Villa, According to the Text Established and Arranged by Martín Luis Guzmán*). It is a novelized or imaginary autobiography in which the Villa he knew so well recounts the story of his own life and apologia therefor in such language as he might well have used if he had lived to dictate his memoirs to his one-time literary aide-de-camp. When finished it will be a six-volume work, of which four volumes have already been published, and is likely to compete with *The Eagle and the Serpent* for the place of Guzmán's masterpiece.

In between his labors on the life and deeds of Pancho Villa, Guzmán turned his attention from the military encampment to the presidential palace and corridors of the Chamber of Deputies, for a close-up of the "men of the Revolution" after they reached the precarious summits of power. His *La Sombra del Caudillo* (*The Shadow*

*of the Chief*) is a vivid and terrifying account of political intrigue, demagoguery, treachery, disloyalty, ambush and assassination: a behind-the-scenes picture of a presidential "election." As in the other works, it is difficult to say where history leaves off and novel begins, for it is a novelized version of an actual "election" of the late twenties, so thinly disguised that it is impossible for the Mexican reader to keep the real names of the personages out of his mind as he reads. In it are revealed the mysterious and quivering springs of Mexican politics: the scarcely-tamed bandits turned governors and political apostles; the mouth-filling revolutionary slogans and party labels with no social content behind them; the "laborites," "agrarians," "progressives" and "revolutionaries" who devote their words to the masses and their deeds to the pursuit of their own interests; the politician-orator who has never been able to say four words together even in the privacy of his own home, or of a brothel, except in the tone and with the bearing of an orator; the generals who pledge themselves in strict confidence to both rival chieftains at once, while they continue to measure the time to jump and the advantages accruing from betraying one or the other of the two candidates they daily embrace; the voice of the crowd and the street, cynical, skeptical, malicious, which spreads rumors, stirs ambitions, plays on weaknesses, arouses passions, speculating all the

while on the pleasurable prospect of witnessing a bloody and thrilling spectacle, akin to that of the bull-fighter finishing off the bull.

## III

If *The Shadow of the Caudillo* shows the Revolution as it looks from the summits of power and *The Eagle and the Serpent* shows it as seen from the vantage point of leadership in the field, it is to Mariano Azuela's *Los de Abajo*, 1916 (translated as *The Underdogs*, 1929), that we must turn for a picture of the Revolution as it looked to the obscure local leaders and the fighting, suffering anonymous rank and file, who came from the depths of Mexican society. This series of intermittent struggles of over three decades plowed up the depths of peasant, peon and Indian society, appealed to the down-trodden illiterate mass who supplied the troops of all hands, intoxicated them with promises not really meant and often not fully realizable without a long prior course of economic, political, social and cultural transformation. To the lowly and the humble the Revolution was a release from enforced humility, a rifle placed in the hand, a chance to "plunder the plunderers," an escape from simple, monotonous and unrewarding toil to stirring adventure, and comradeship of danger and death in the field that was to the Mexican temperament as exciting as an endless festa. But even the wildest and most intoxicating fiesta palls in time. What began as a bitter hatred and a flaming

hope degenerated into a senseless marching and counter-marching, advancing and fleeing, starving and surfeiting, killing and being killed, for a succession of victorious leaders who were quick to forget the humble on whose backs they had climbed to power. Mexican family ties are notoriously loose and there were women to be had everywhere on the route of march, but sometime a man wanted a home and children, a piece of land to settle down on with dog and horse and rifle, a settled, stable and dignified existence, a chance to live the new way of life that the Revolution perpetually promised and perpetually used as tocsin to sound the cry of betrayal and summon anew into the field. In lean, nervous, staccato prose, in campfire-lit flashes and gunfire-lit charges and flights, a prose as stark and episodic and violent as the deeds it portrays, Mariano Azuela, military surgeon turned novelist, records the scenes of battle, march, camp, deserted and gutted home. The terrible power of the account is heightened by the Homeric impartiality and tight restraint, which forces the reader to react with the greater intensity because the author has held his own feelings back. Sacrifice and suffering, death and debauchery, anguish and orgy, heroism and hope, bewilderment and violence and despair succeed each other through the pages of this, the Revolution's outstanding masterpiece and true image. Its very inconclusiveness is the inconclusiveness of the Revolution itself, which

could destroy and raze and sweep away but so far has been unable to build the new life with the promise of which it summoned the lowly to leave the narrow circle of their common days. Through it all rings the unanswered question: *What for?* The hero is not an individual but, as in so many revolutionary novels, the entire folk.

#### IV

One of the undoubted achievements of the Mexican Revolution has been the gradual, sporadic, but ever more substantial redistribution of the land. This, and the accompanying cult of the redemption of the Indian at the bottom of the social pyramid, has represented not a step towards a socialist or post-capitalist society but rather a reversion to primitive, pre-conquest subsistence agriculture. In time this reversal may well lead to a new fusion of the Iberian and Indian culture strains and a greater well-being and power over his own destiny for the tiller of the soil. But how has this great, uncompleted and unintegrated reform worked out so far in practice? Here, too, the novel gives a disturbing but truthful answer. In the thirties, with the active civil war a romanticized, receding memory, we can watch the growing disillusion of the younger novelists.

Thus, Gregorio López y Fuentes's novel of Zapata's rebellion, *Tierra* (*Land*, 1933), ends with the assassination of Zapata (which took place in 1919). But the Indians still possess the

land they have seized and their buried rifles to protect it. To them Zapata is living still and will return to lead them in time of need, so that the novel closes on a note of hope. Two years later the novelist jumps a decade to examine the fate of the "redeemed" Indian in his own time. *El Indio*, 1935 (translated into English with the same title in 1937), is a frightening picture of exploitation and betrayal by politicians who rise to power with promises of redemption on their lips.

The same theme is handled with still greater power by Mauricio Magdaleno in his *Resplendor*, 1937 (translated into English as *Sunburst*, 1944). Again the protagonist is not an individual but a community, a wretched, pestilential handful of huts of Otomi Indians on a barren, highland slope. Its personages are members of "a race sick from centuries of humiliation and bitterness," a village which has learned to circumscribe suffering only by narrowing the horizon of expectation. Centuries have passed over this mangy village, régimes have come and gone, battles been fought with its inhabitants as cannon fodder and pitiful prize. Of late, bad has become worse, thanks to the destructive phase of the revolution and the ravages of cumulative degradation. The great estate in the bottom lands that exploited these humble peons has closed down since its owner was slain in a revolutionary foray; the eroded upland barren has ceased to bear at all poisoned by outcropping lime; the

very lime has ceased to fetch a price and the reptiles and birds which might have been snared have sought less inhospitable places. Even God is leaving, for the parish priest can no longer endure the spectacle of misery and continue to preach resignation. All that remains are fragments of broken-down Indian superstitions, which, through a succession of signs and portents nourish the sudden sunburst of hope, prime mover of the tragic events of the novel. An orphan boy from their village, taken away by a "revolutionary" governor to get an education, now according to the voice of rumor and the signs of witchcraft, is about to return as their redeemer. His visit as gubernatorial candidate is a veritable festival of rejoicing. From their lack they scrape together the means for a reception such as they might give to their patron Saint Andrew himself if he were to visit their village. They sacrifice, to the candidate's casual lust the most beautiful of their maidens, the witch doctor poisoning her betrothed to safeguard the life of their Redeemer. From his demagogic speeches they glean that the rich bottom lands will become theirs and that he will build them a dam to banish sterility and starvation forever. But the old estate is reopened as an "experimental station," the overseer reappears in the guise of a revolutionary bureaucrat managing the station, the *hacienda* commissary once more binds them in debt peonage in the form of "cooperative credits," the old servile labors are extracted

without even the old miserable compensation since "now they are working for themselves and for their future." Tyranny is even greater than of old because henceforth it will operate in their own name. Still they cling to the desperate hope that it is the local tyrants and not the Governor, "their Governor!" When at last they comprehend the full depths of their betrayal and essay a pathetic rebellion, an avalanche of punitive cruelty descends upon them to teach them their place in "the new order." Dumbly they watch at the end while the Governor selects one of their children once more to go to the city to be educated so that he may be their "Redeemer."

It has remained for a woman novelist, Magdalena Mondragón, to write the parable of the present ebb-phase of the Mexican Revolution in *Yo como Pobre* (translated as *Some Day the Dream*, 1947). This is at once the most unusual and the most Mexican of Mexican novels of the Revolution, in its episodes, in its approach to life, to sex, to politics, to civic corruption, to Mexico itself, and, above all, to death. Its protagonist is a community of sorts, a group of people born and raised on the edge of Mexico City's outlying garbage dumps. They subsist and procreate in crude huts of mud and salvaged tin, surrounded by unwholesome vapors and refuse. They make their living by rushing to each cart as it discharges its detritus, to sort therefrom bits of rag, metal, paper,

partly rotted foodstuffs, which they use or sell. Their efforts to earn a living during the rainy season, when the refuse is too soggy to yield much, carries them into the city itself, as street sweepers, garbage collectors, prostitutes, beggars. Their dream — a government subsidy for a cooperative for the commercial exploitation of the city's wastes — takes them into trade unionism, cooperation, politics, which prove to be other forms of waste and corruption. An occasional windfall gives them entry into cheap dance halls, sidewalk "restaurants," cantinas, lockups, hospitals, morgues. An epidemic among their sickly children brings sanitary authorities and clergy to their dump, and culminates in their collective celebration of the greatest of Mexico's fiestas, joining death and revelry.

Thus all of Mexican life is reviewed in a fierce parable in which Mexico itself, the city this time, not the countryside, is a wasteland and abode of stinking corruption. Life is sustained only by the animal will to exist, by pitiful dreams, flashes of hope amidst hopelessness, gleams of sentiment, solid bonds of love, pity, charity. But always the corruption, by its sheer cumulative weight and ubiquity, overwhelms everything, except the determination of these dwellers in the wasteland to cling to life to the end and to celebrate death with the proper joyousness. There is a continuous strain of poetry and there are

moments of wayward beauty in this novel, even as the ravine of the La Morena dump sprouts wildflowers amidst the refuse. The poetic feeling embraces the rare, the absurd, the shocking, the iridescent sheen on the surface of corruption, the violence and cruelty and death that are at the heart of life.

The reader will make a mistake if he lets himself be repelled by the maggots in the first line or the vultures perched on roses that adorn the jacket. For along with the stark poverty in its original title and the corruption which is symbolized by its setting, the "dream" of the translated title is in it too; even as, in the very bitterness of the indictment, one can sense the author's love for her land and her people.

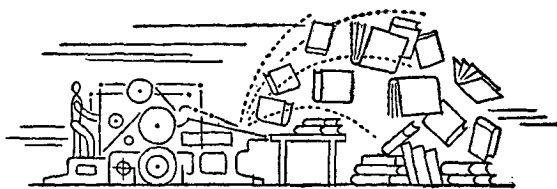
Indeed, it is the real source of passion in all these novels. If the reader will read those available in English translation — *The Eagle and the Serpent*; *The Underdogs*; *El Indio*; *Sunburst*; *Some Day the Dream* — he will get a truer picture of the Mexican Revolution than from all the reportorial books and sociological studies that have been published on it. For this is the deeper insight. And, if the verdict of the Mexican novel on the present state of the Mexican Revolution seems gloomy and bitter, it is not cynical or utterly despairing, for it is set down with honesty and supported by the unstated premise of a still-living hope.



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# THE CHECK LIST

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## HISTORY

THE MEANING OF HUMAN HISTORY, by Morris R. Cohen \$4.00. *Open Court*. This posthumous book by the late American philosopher formed the Paul Carus Lectures in 1944. It reveals Dr. Cohen in all his many extraordinary qualities — severely critical logician, scholar of vast erudition and startling penetration, fearless epistemologist, and master of mature English prose. The richness of thought in this panoramic view of human history is so enormous that it instantly takes its place as a major contribution to American philosophy. Dr. Cohen deals severely with the evolutionary and theological views of history, pointing out how absurd they are logically and how they are contradicted by events. His own view, derived in part from Felix Adler, might be called ethical-tragic. According to it all history has to be examined from the point of view of right and wrong, for otherwise history would have no meaning whatever. History, to be sure, is to a large extent, “the cemetery of human hopes,” but it can also serve as a liberating force, teaching humility in the face of values strange to us, and adding assurance to the faith that while evil has won many victories, “the spirit of truth as a superior vitality.” Above all things, history proves that “good causes are more often defeated by negligence in the pursuit of the right than by the active forces of evil.”

RESIDENT ROOSEVELT AND THE COMING OF THE WAR — 1941, *A Study in Circumstances and Realities*, by Charles A. Beard. \$5.00. *Yale*. This massive volume (614 large pages) is both a restatement of the isolationist philosophy and a history of American foreign

policy during 1941. Stated baldly, the thesis of the book is that President Roosevelt tricked and cajoled an unwilling nation into an unnecessary war whose results have been catastrophic; and that because of Roosevelt’s policies “the American Republic has arrived at the theory that the President of the United States possesses limitless authority publicly to misrepresent and secretly to control foreign policy, foreign affairs and the war power.” Professor Beard has little difficulty in demonstrating that the President’s public statements often bore little relation to his official actions; but the argument over the wisdom of those actions tends to bog down in a mass of undigested and conflicting testimonies, documents, newspaper clippings, congressional committee transcripts, etc. Nevertheless, the book has great importance and undoubtedly will wield much influence in the writing of future histories of our times.

THE MARCH OF MUSCOVY, *Ivan the Terrible and the Growth of the Russian Empire*, by Harold Lamb. \$3.75. *Doubleday*. In this book, as in Mr. Lamb’s works on Genghis Khan and the Crusades, the method consists of quoting heavily from diaries and other original sources and stringing this material together with a series of rather personalized narratives. Like most historians, Mr. Lamb believes that Ivan was not insane, but his frequent hysterical outbursts were rather the result of a lifetime spent in justified fear of assassination. The growth of Moscow in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, to the point where it became the first city of Russia, is explained by Mr. Lamb in terms of the Muscovites’ appeasement of the Tatar conquerors while the other cities were repeatedly razed for resisting.

## PUBLIC QUESTIONS

MISSOURI WALTZ, by Maurice M. Milligan. \$3.50. *Scribners*. As the former U. S. Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, Mr. Milligan was ideally equipped to do this muckraking job on the Pendergast machine. There never was much question, of course, that Tom Pendergast was a complete dictator in Kansas City, but some of the details of his rule (10 per cent of the city's policemen had criminal records) are still shocking. Much of Mr. Milligan's animus is directed against Harry Truman, who is held responsible for the rebirth of Pendergast rule after Tom Pendergast went to prison. The author does not believe that Truman ever made any dishonest money from his association with Pendergast, but he insinuates pretty strongly that when Truman was presiding judge of the County Court he threw a lot of municipal business to the Boss' private concrete company; and that Truman's two elections to the Senate would probably have been impossible without balloting frauds in Kansas City. When Truman became President, the author says, he paid off his debt by stifling all Federal investigations of the machine, which is now almost as powerful as ever.

TOWARD WORLD PEACE, by Henry A. Wallace. \$1.75. *Reynal & Hitchcock*. Mr. Wallace's latest book is occasionally apocalyptic and occasionally banal, and not infrequently it achieves a nice synthesis of both. The volume, which bears the endorsements of Jo Davidson, Howard Mumford Jones and Albert Einstein on its dust jacket, will come as no shock to anyone. The author repeats in it his strictures against the Czech "rightists, who precipitated with American support the crisis which backfired." He comes out squarely against "reactionary capitalism" and in favor of "progressive capitalism." He refuses to "accept the support of any person or group which places allegiance to another nation above its allegiance to the United States"; but then, as though this has nothing to do with the Communists, he quickly adds that he is "utterly and completely against all types of red-baiting," which leaves everything about where it was. At one point Mr. Wallace makes a rather surprising concession to his enemies: "Russia," he says,

"must make it clear to her Communist friends that reactionary capitalism still has some years of useful service to humanity . . . before it passes into discard."

OUR OWN BAEDEKER, *From the New Yorker*, by Eugene Kinkade and Russell Maloney. \$3.75. *Simon & Schuster*. The contents of this book originally formed a series of contributions to a *New Yorker* department, which aimed to give Manhattanites a special global view of other lands. In the magazine they made pleasant reading occasionally for a few minutes, but put together in a book they seem labored, sloppily written and even boring. Indeed, it is rather embarrassing to read page after page of such adolescent attempts at humor: "Constantinople . . . is a hell of a fabulous place. . . . Until recently, 85 per cent of the [Turks] remained illiterate probably in self-defence. . . . Turkey has roughly the area of Texas, the population of New York State, and more headaches than both. . . . Lithuania was big stuff back in the Middle Ages. . . ." Geoffrey T. Hellmann contributes an introduction. It is wholly unnecessary, for it only adds five pages of forced humor and cuteness to a book that overflows with both. The many illustrations by Carl Rose are the only bright spots in the entire production.

## BIOGRAPHY

THE JOURNALS OF ANDRÉ GIDE. *Volume I. 1889-1913*, translated by Justin O'Brien. \$5.00. *Knopf*. Dr. O'Brien, in his excellent introduction to this, the first of a projected series of volumes of Gide's Journals, says that on the basis of this work alone Gide belongs to the company of Montaigne and Goethe. One must agree with this judgment, for the journals are amazing in their profound spiritual candor, penetrating thoughts and revelation of a truly great and noble human being. Their central theme is "Data to be yourself," which appears time and again in one form or another, in this volume. Gide sees all human courage, character and drama in terms of this one dictum, and his constant development of it enriches these pages with truly priceless wisdom. Gide reports his struggle with himself in the realms of composition and

friendships, outlines books that saw the light only years later, offers comments upon the many eminent personages who passed before his eyes, and jots down bits of philosophy that impressed themselves upon his mind. Some examples: "Léon Blum . . . has too much intelligence and not enough personality. . . . And do not long, through vanity, for a too hasty manifestation of one's essence. . . . Catholicism is inadmissible. Protestantism is intolerable. And I feel profoundly Christian. . . . Art is just as far from turmoil as from apathy. . . . Beware of artistic protestations; the real artist does not sport a red waistcoat and is not eager to talk of his art." There is a valuable glossary of persons, followed by a bibliography of the works of Gide.

THE HOODED HAWK, *The Case of Mr. James Boswell*, by D. B. Wyndham Lewis. \$4.00. Longmans. It would be extremely difficult to verpraise this latest book by the highly gifted Mr. Lewis. It is not merely a superb defense of the monstrous tosspot, whoremonger and lick-pittle, who also happened to have written what is perhaps the greatest biography in any language. It is a magnificent biography in itself. It has exactly what Mr. Lewis says distinguishes the celebrated *Life*, namely, ecstasy. Mr. Lewis, because of his warm affection for his subject, has little difficulty in recording fully the many defects of the "deboshed rake and lunatic," who "all his life . . . was teetering on the verge of complete sanity." Nay, he almost glories in these effects, for they make Boswell's immortal achievement all the greater, all the more mysterious, all the more worthy of being written about as long as English is the mighty instrument that has been for literary artists all these centuries. As for Mr. Lewis' sheer writing, one can only say that it is in his own best style, which is to say, it is sparkling, scholarly, filled with apposite literary allusions, and overflowing with a rare urgency of soul and impeccable literary manners. It probably joins the stream of the enduring classics of the language.

### FICTION

THE IDES OF MARCH, by Thornton Wilder. 2.75. Harper. Apparently this is a biography of

Caesar against the background of his times, told in terms of fictional letters and documents. Mr. Wilder calls it "a fantasia on certain events and persons of the last days of the Roman republic." Obviously a tremendous amount of research has gone into this "novel," and there are innumerable displays of what the author probably thinks is profound wisdom, for example: "Our minds are a market place in which the slave brushes against the sage, or an untended garden where the weed springs beside the rose. . . . [A woman] can feel only contempt for any opinion that opposes her own. Reason is unnecessary and trifling to one so endowed: she is deaf in advance." But the net effect of the volume is one of boredom, for there is not a living character in it, not a spray of warm emotion, not an iota of drama — yet the book pretends to deal with one of the most vital, exciting and dramatic periods in all of human history!

THAT WINTER, by Merle Miller. \$3.00. William Sloane Associates. The period referred to by the title is the early winter of 1945, when American veterans had begun to return from Europe and the Pacific, and many of them landed in New York, where the artistic among them sought to make a name for themselves in a hurry. Mr. Miller writes in the first person. He has no story to tell. He merely rambles on, as one would in a beery conversation, about his own *Weltschmerz* and about a dozen or so of his friends: a one-armed ex-soldier who finally shoots himself; a Jewish ex-soldier, who changes his name to escape his "Jewishness," gets engaged to an anti-Semitic girl and is saved in the end by his mother; a second-rate novelist, who marries a woman some ten years his senior and "covers up" by drinking; his wife, Martha, who is, of course, very sensible and "understands" her husband; an ex-soldier who is all gold but who is deserted by his wife; a girl who sleeps with men but does not allow them to spend the whole night at her apartment; and, needless to say, the hero's mother, whose husband dies, but who bravely carries on. One of the literary scandals of the season is the large amount of critical praise this shabby book has received. It is all surface, cheaply written, shoddily thought out and reeking with emotional and intellectual vulgarity.

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## THE OPEN FORUM

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### THE TRUTH ABOUT PENNSYLVANIA

SIR: As one who has been born and reared in Pennsylvania I naturally read Matthew Huttner's profile of the state in the February AMERICAN MERCURY with great interest. I am sorry to say that I do not think he does justice to his subject. In fact, his article bears every evidence of having been hastily slapped together — or else the typesetter was bothered by an unusually large number of Gremlins.

The first paragraph states that "moving westward along the aristocratic Main Line you . . . skirt the factory-laden Lehigh Valley." It would take a remarkable bit of meandering to accomplish that feat. The Lebanon Valley is evidently what Mr. Huttner has in mind.

"From the wildly beautiful Wissahickon to the placid Perkiomén" sounds like poetry in prose but does not make much sense. The distance between the mouths of these two creeks is less than 25 miles. Moreover, I have personally seen the "placid" Perkiomen during one of its numerous floods smash a frame building against the stone arch bridge at Collegeville into splinters.

"Philadelphia has always been Republican, Pittsburgh Democratic." Shades of David L. Lawrence, if he were a shade! Pittsburgh went Democratic only a few years ago, and Allegheny county only last year. It was traditionally Republican, but thanks to Democrat Lawrence's shrewd political leadership it now bids fair to stay Democratic.

And Lawrence's middle initial is L, not I. And Fairless's is F, not J; and Grace's is G, not L.

The statement that all the nation's anthracite comes from 484 square miles around Scranton is not going to please such anthracite cities as Wilkes-Barre, Hazleton, Mauch Chunk, Lansford, Kingston, Pittston, and other proudly up-and-coming coal centers. Scranton has been on the skids from the point of view of a civic-

minded Chamber of Commerce, but not Wilkes-Barre, *et al.* Even distant Pottsville will probably resent being placed in Scranton's orbit.

The long list of religious sects and denominations which Huttner says are collectively called "Plain People" is completely a misstatement of fact. Only the Amish are so called, and so call themselves. Moreover, book stores in the Pennsylvania Dutch sections of the state are *not* filled with books upon powwowing and *hexerei*. You have only two sizable book stores in my own home town, and neither caters to the hexic trade. I have browsed in Lancaster book stores any number of times, and have yet to see a book on *hexerei* on the shelves. In fact, the only place such books are likely to be found today are museums. What about the astrologist, numismatologist, palmist, and other magazine trash that currently litters up the newsstands in every state in the Union? Why pick on Pennsylvania?

And what does Mr. Huttner mean when he says that Martin, not Guffey, picked our excellent Governor Duff? Martin and Duff are both Republicans, and of course no one would expect Democrat Guffey to pick a Republican governor. The statement does not make sense.

As I said, either the Gremlins were holding a convention in the composing room when this article was set into type, or else it was hastily scribbled down by the writer. Pennsylvania does not deserve such a bad break.

WARREN M. SMALTZ

Lebanon, Pa.

SIR: From the enthusiastic response which we have received from Pennsylvania editors and state officials I think we can dismiss Missionary Smaltz' first paragraph without comment. But I am indebted to the gremlin-less missionary

some corrections: Lehigh Valley should have been Lebanon. Grundy, not Guffey, was meant in the reference to choosing Governor Duff. As for the incorrect initials . . . my face is red.

Mr. Smaltz may have seen the Perkiomen River smash a frame building at Collegeville but that was a most unusual occurrence. What stream doesn't go berserk when torrent-swollen by snow or rain? Normally the Perkiomen is as placid a river as there is in Pennsylvania. And the fact that its mouth is only 25 miles from that of the Wissahickon only sharpens the point that I made, to wit, "The whole state is a blending of opposites."

In the manuscript which I submitted to the *MERCURY* were the words, "Philadelphia has been Republican since God made green apples, Pittsburgh flies the banner of the Donkey." Unfortunately this was changed in the editing to Philadelphia has always been Republican, Pittsburgh Democratic," thereby implying that Pittsburgh has *always* been Democratic. The facts are these: Pittsburgh went Democratic back in 1935 and has been that way ever since. Thirteen years is long enough to make any poster gripe about a Democratic tradition.

My statement that all the nation's anthracite comes from 484 square miles around Scranton is entirely correct, and in no way controverts the existence or importance of other coal centers within that area. As yet, no protest has been received from Mauch Chunk (pop. 3206).

Now for the "Plain People." If Missionary maltz will review his religious history he will find that most Plain Sects date back to the Anabaptists of the seventeenth century. The Amish broke away from them in 1693. Then followed the Reform Mennonites, the River Brethren and the Brinsers. The Yorkers, who split with the River Brethren, are Plain People. So are the Dunkers who sprang from the Pietists of the early eighteenth century. Lately many of these sects have gradually shed their long beards and plain clothes while the Amish stubbornly cling to them. This has confused Mr. maltz into thinking the Amish have sole claim to being Plain. Actually many Mennonite and Dunker women still affect black bonnets and black coats and the men large black hats.

When I traveled through the Plain Sect area in 1940 I had no trouble finding books on powwow. Neither did Miss Hark in her interesting county, "Hex Marks the Spot." And according to the *Pennsylvania Guide* (1946), "The continual sale of books on 'powwow' and other mysterious arts is evidence of the credulity that still

persists in parts of Pennsylvania's hinterland." The sophisticated reader is not likely to have his appreciation of the commonwealth blighted by these disclosures.

MATTHEW HUTTNER

*New York City*

## THE STATE OF TEXAS

SIR: Stanley Walker wrote a fine article about Texas in your March issue. Texas is a great State, and has an unusual history.

But why did Stanley have to write this: "Its [Texas] pride would not be wounded by being called just another state — like Mississippi, Delaware or Vermont."

Is Stanley aware of the fact that for fourteen years Vermont was a sovereign republic? Vermont declared her independence in 1777 and, until she joined the Union in 1791, maintained a struggle against New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, the Congress and the British.

During those fourteen years, Vermont established her own postal system, coined her own money, naturalized natives of other states and countries and negotiated a commercial treaty with the Province of Quebec. Little Vermont has given two Presidents to the United States. To paraphrase Daniel Webster, "Vermont is a small state, but there are those who love it."

PERLEY J. HILL

*Colonial Park, Pa.*

SIR: Mr. Hill, of course, is right about Vermont's glorious history and the fact that there are those who love the state. My whole point was that, in the eyes of Texans, it seems rather ludicrous to have to regard that stony, scrubby little place, with its notoriously clam-mouthed and close-fisted citizens, as a sovereign state, entitled to two United States Senators and all other perquisites of full statehood. Set down in Texas, Vermont would be looked upon as a quaint though unprofitable and somewhat backward county. This is nothing to get stirred up about; it's just the way Texans look at such things.

STANLEY WALKER

*Lampasas, Tex.*

## THE MARCH ISSUE

SIR: I'm a charter member. Began subscribing to the *MERCURY* 'way back (was it 25 years ago?), with the lush vocabulary of Mencken and the  
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(Continued from page 763)

impertinences of Nathan. This March issue seems to me the best in all the years, with more good writing, more vital subjects, more grip than ever before. Carmichael gives the best definition of an educated man that I have read. Buligin's account of a professor's life in Russia is excellent, and Seligman's blow-by-blow . . . account of the collapse of democracy in Czechoslovakia is an appropriate companion piece. Democracy there, as a matter of fact, expired in Seligman's face just as he finished writing. The two portraits are masterpieces of their kind — Robinson on Forresta and Stanley Walker on Texas. . . .

LOUIS BLAKE DUFF

Welland, Canada

CLEL MILLER

SIR: The January AMERICAN MERCURY carried an article that was of considerable interest to me personally. I refer to "The Bank the James Boy Didn't Rob," by Stewart H. Holbrook. Sixty-two years ago I left my Ohio home to see the West. My first range work was north of the Yellowstone almost to the Missouri. Later I was with a cattle outfit south of the Yellowstone. While there I became well acquainted with the three McDonald brothers who were from Missouri. These men were first cousins of Clel Miller who, as Mr. Holbrook relates, was killed in front of the bank in Northfield. From Billy McDonald I was able to get complete information about Clel Miller. He was a physician and surgeon and had a lucrative practice in the Missouri town (whose name I have forgotten) where his family and the McDonalds lived. Occasionally Miller would leave home and be away, sometimes for several weeks at a time. On his return he would tell his neighbors that he had been away taking post-graduate course in medicine or surgery. His standing in the community was high, and until he was killed in Northfield none of his Missouri friends ever had an inkling that he was a member of the James-Younger gang. . . .

W. C. RUSSELL

Coral Gables, Fla.

**SOLVING THE DIVORCE PROBLEM**

SIR: Anent Dorothy Dunbar Bromley's "On Scandalous Divorce Laws" in the March AMERICAN MERCURY, I have something to suggest.

The only humane way of solving the divorce problem is to do away with marriages, civil or religious, altogether. Simple, isn't it? Solved in four words: *no marriages; no divorces.* . . .

So-called civilizations are at best only skin deep; and anciently people copulated and died without benefit of clergy or justices of the peace. And got along much better than they do today.

So why not admit that marriage is an out-moded institution? . . .

LV L. MILLER

Salem, Ore.

## POET'S CORNER

SIR: In the March "Open Forum" Mr. Robert C. Barnett of Missouri contributes a poem which has in it some of the strange names of towns in his state; and asks, Can any other state match that? Yes, my lowly and much-maligned State of Mississippi can, and here is the poem:

I drove *Tennile* to see Miss *Maud*  
A *Recluse* at *D'Lo*,  
Her *Flattop* house is hung with *Moss*  
But her face was all *Agloe*.  
In *Derby*, suit and neat white *Vest*  
And my bag of *Alligator*  
I knocked, with *Shivers* down my spine,  
But felt *Soso* much later.  
At *Midnight* when I put the quiz  
On the *Sunnyside* I found her,  
"Why not?" she said (no lemon she),  
My *Arm* then went around her.

ALBA DUKE

Indianola, Miss.

## FORRESTAL'S INCOME TAX

SIR: In Donald Robinson's profile of "Secretary of Defense Forrestal" in the March AMERICAN MERCURY, we are told that Forrestal's '1929 stock transactions netted him \$864,000, a sum upon which . . . he avoided paying any income tax by simply — and legally — setting up a chain of holding companies that stretched over into Canada. . . ."

I have read many articles in which representatives of the Internal Revenue Bureau have stated that they have no desire that citizens pay more income tax than they owe. . . . On the other hand, I don't believe any citizen, including Mr. Forrestal himself, would deny that the intent of our revenue laws, whether one can pay someone to discover a technical loophole or not, is that each citizen contribute to the national welfare through the government, his contribution being measured in reasonable proportion to his ability to pay. . . .

ROBERT W. RUSSELL

Wacoma, Wash.

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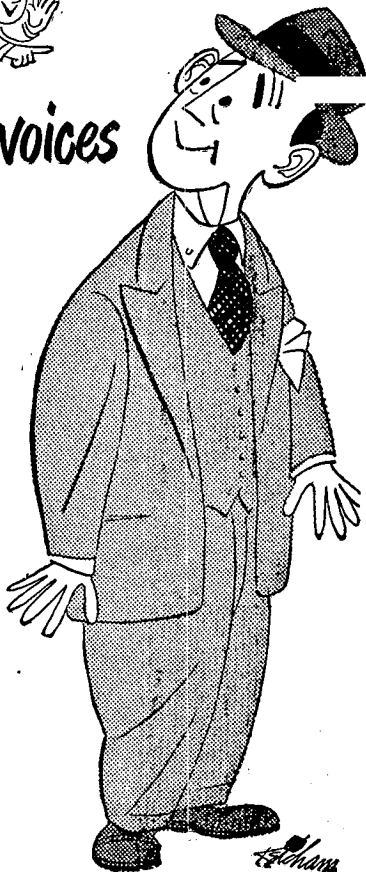
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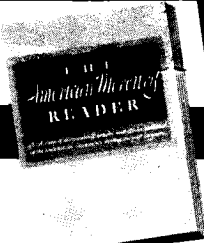


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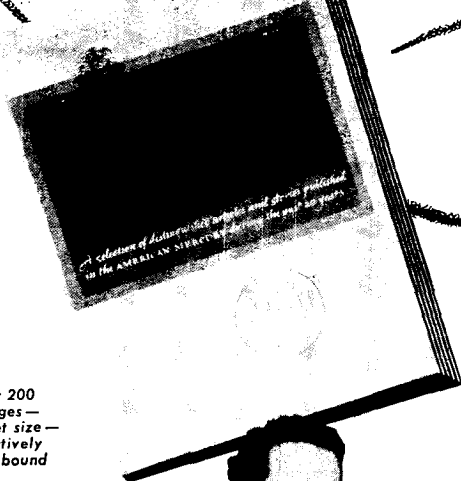
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